

STEPHANOS NIRMALENDU GHOSH LECTURES, 1968

THE HUMAN JOURNEY

EDWIN A. BURTT

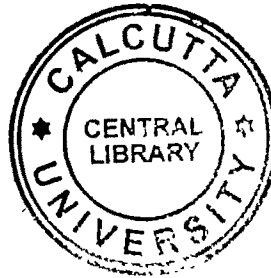


**UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA
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Stephanos Nirmalendu Ghosh
Lectures on Comparative Religion
1968

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EDWIN A. BURTT

CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	5
Introduction	7
CHAPTER I. The Great Historical Transformation	15
CHAPTER II. Emotion, Awareness, and Valuation as Basic Forces in Man	41
CHAPTER III. From Unperceptive Bondage to Free Growth in Love	59
CHAPTER IV. Toward a Greater Humanity	87
CHAPTER V. Science as a Major Guide on the Journey	111
CHAPTER VI. Religion as a Major Guide on the Journey	131
CHAPTER VII. Journeying Beyond the Horizon	163
Outline of the Plan of Lectures	<i>i</i>

PREFACE

When I was invited to fill the Stephanos Nirmalendu Ghosh Lectureship at the University of Calcutta I had been trying for some time to survey the whole history of mankind in an endeavor to understand it better—as a whole and in its main phases such as science and religion. I was aiming through this survey to clarify the conditions under which man can progress from where he is now toward an authentic world community.

The terms of the Ghosh Lectureship were such that I felt it appropriate to present what was taking form in my mind as a set of Ghosh Lectures, which were given in January, 1968. In the present volume they have been revised and considerably expanded.

Due to unexpected circumstances, the lectures were delivered in the auditorium of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture instead of at the University. I am grateful for the hospitality Mrs. Burtt and I received both from the University and from the Institute.

May the Lectures now reach a wide and responsive audience.

March 30, 1981. Ithaca, N. Y.

Edwin A. Burtt

INTRODUCTION

What a strange creature man is—endowed with remarkable talents and also with stubborn follies that could be his undoing ! Our prime need is to understand him.

Where is he now in his long journey through history ? What important gains have been made ? What obstructions impede his progress ? Is he doomed to advance no farther than he already has—perhaps to backslide and even to destroy himself ? What resources are aiding him ? Is hope justified that despite blunders, frustrations, and relapses he will go forward ?

These are big questions. No one knows what the perfect answer to them would be. But without a broad view of human life that points toward a sound answer people are bewildered, whereas with it they can in some measure understand the present confusing scene and gird themselves to meet it. In such a view they can make sense out of their varied experiences and see how to think and act wisely.

Today is a very provocative time for seeking an inclusive view. People confront many perplexing and persistent quandaries that thus far have resisted any real solution. There are the menacing threats of nuclear war and unchecked ecological pollution. There are the harassing problems posed by rapidly expanding population, by swelling tension between the "have" and "have-not" classes or nations, by continued migration from rural areas to the sprawling cities in their dismal decay, by the progressive automation of productive activities, and by momentous biological or psychological transmutations such as earlier generations could not even imagine.

Why cannot these quandaries be readily solved ? Extremely hard ones have been solved in the past.

I answer : The core of man's present plight is new. All people throughout the globe have been thrown together into a single kaleidoscopically interacting neighborhood, while they are still in the grip of tribal prejudices and turbulent passions. Their attitudes toward each other reflect the past separation of tribes and nations, religions and ideologies. All the irascible and suspicious emotions that accompany those attitudes are still present ; all the limitations of their parochial ways of life and habits of thinking are still evident, although they are now living in a universally interdependent world. Three-fourths of this wholesale change have taken place during the present century ; in that short time the inhabitants of our planet have moved from an aggregate of dispersed peoples only vaguely aware of each other into an intercommunicating and mutually dependent body.

The loss of generally accepted moral convictions is especially serious. No society has long survived without a set of moral values in which its members deeply believe. Its unity and strength depend on them. Very significantly, over large areas of the world the values on which the present social order is based were accepted because they were believed to be commanded by God, as the authoritative governor of the universe. Today that support is rapidly disappearing. The tragic effect is that to more and more people life seems to have no meaning beyond the petty concerns of the moment.

To be sure, the scene also has an encouraging side. Vast possibilities of good open ahead as well as vast possibilities of evil. The tossing together of peoples previously separated creates an arena in which all can expand their experience and win fuller understanding. Just as the building of cities several thousand years ago opened an era of rapid progress for people who had been isolated in village life, so the coalescing of the whole world into a single neighborhood can arouse an even more rapid development of man's capabilities in society. But to respond wisely to that opportunity takes much time. The immediate effect is upsetting. Men and women feel that their protecting walls are crumbling, familiar patterns of life are undermined, old beliefs are weakening, and the new ones needed have not yet taken clear form. To be thus torn from their roots brings out the resentful perversity of men more easily than their capacity for a happier way of living and thinking.

Confronted by this ominous predicament, we wonder anxiously whether any hope for man's future is justified. Without hope men and women may continue to exist but cannot truly live. However, it must be a realistic hope, or they will be betrayed by the wishful thinking into which it is easy to fall. On what terms is such a hope possible ?

For a long period we confidently believed that science will lead us into the bright future men aspire for. And its achievement is indeed great. But we see now that it cannot give us what we need most. Can religion justify hope for the future? Perhaps, but in the past its hopes were based on the theology of some particular religion and on doctrines about life and the universe that are incompatible with scientific truths now becoming more and more persuasive.

How can we honestly hope? Before any encouraging change comes, the nuclear missiles may fall. Even if that catastrophe is avoided, it may well be that before reconstruction on an enduring foundation can begin the world will have to live through a lengthy period of swelling tumult, widespread suffering, and even savage destruction. Outbursts of violence are already frequent in new as well as old forms.

To survive, humanity must meet the inexorable conditions. And they are severe conditions; a bright future cannot be bought at the bargain table. Through the whole of biological evolution the living species that win out are the ones best adjusted to the diverse forces impinging on them at the time they compete for existence. But such forces change from epoch to epoch. Look at the many species that arose and prospered for a while but failed to survive—e.g., the dinosaurs. At their first appearance they were successfully adapted, and they continued to live for a longer period than man has thus far survived. Yet, when more intelligent species appeared and the environment changed, they could not readapt, and gave way to more capable rivals.

What we see nature progressively achieving through the course of history is not to preserve the species best suited at any given time—more than nine-tenths of them have sooner or later perished—but to produce new species and with their aid to develop the most resourceful inhabitants of the earth. This truth is crucial for wise understanding. Thus far man has proved more resourceful than his competitors; will he be able to meet the present challenge? It looks as though the conditions to which he must adjust have sharply changed. The fundamental change—very hard as yet for people to accept—is that the social unit able to survive into the future is no longer the separate tribe or nation or alliance of nations as was the case in the past; all groups are interdependent and are steadily becoming more so. There is no longer any plausibility in the tempting conceit that a world is possible in which the enemies we hate are destroyed while we and our children continue to live. The unit of survival is now mankind as a whole.

Nevertheless, unrelieved gloom is not compulsory. Humanity has more than once met perils that tested its powers to the utmost, and has survived them. Scientists tell us that the sun will radiate light and warmth for at least a billion years longer ; that is time enough for millions of generations to realize a splendid destiny. It is even time for a future race of beings more capable than man to take his place if he proves unable to realize that destiny.

Shall we then say "Yes" to life ? Our forebears said it, and they have handed the torch to us, trusting that we will be worthy successors. Let us take the torch, thankful for the manifold resources they lacked but which through their dauntless effort we now enjoy—and thankful too that they did not do more than they did, so that we can share with them the inspired adventure of realizing a greater humanity on this planet.

What a time to be living in ! Will man find his way into the future without a devastating catastrophe, or will an era of enduring progress only be ushered in by the survivors of such a catastrophe or by the evolution, millions of years later, of a more perceptive race of intelligent beings on our planet ?

Who is man*—the strange creature that has stumbled into this plight and is struggling to find his way through it ? How can he be understood aright ?

Psychologists, sociologists, historians, and other responsible inquirers are constantly accumulating information about him, and such information is indispensable. Understanding without it would be misunderstanding. Also intensive research, promising to throw light on man's manifold potencies, is now going on in every field. However, when understanding rather than detailed knowledge is our need, scientific thinkers and scrupulous scholars have their limitations. A meticulous investigator may become captivated by petty detail and accumulate data of little importance. The truly great thinker senses a way of telling which among the little clearings of knowledge scattered through the forest he is exploring bring reliable insight. He will realize that man must be understood in the light of his immense possibilities, not just through the presently verifiable facts about him. Moreover—and here is an instructive truth—every novel crisis reveals that man is a somewhat different creature than he had previously appeared to be. So an all-encompassing view allowing for

* The word "man" is used through this essay in its generic sense ; woman is equally included.

new sproutings of experience and new leaps of philosophic genius is essential to authentic understanding. It will not be infallible, but to contribute to human progress it does not need to be. It may provide a foundation on which other thinkers can build where it is sound and which they can revise where it fails to be discerning and fruitful.

Let us seek a vision of the whole career of man, with its splendid achievements and its infinitely greater possibilities—a vision that would make an appropriate place for everything important in his experience—for scientific knowledge, for artistic creation, for religious insight, for moral and social ideals. In such a vista man's growing knowledge can be unified, his emotions harmonized, and his action guided toward a wise goal.

Will you join in this adventure? We will explore, not the structure of the atom, not the geography of the earth, not the enigmas of surrounding space, but the infinite possibilities of man as in interaction with other realities he seeks fuller life and trustworthy understanding.

Two centuries ago the philosopher Kant said to his students: "Man's supreme concern is to know how he may properly fill his place in the universe, and to understand correctly what he must do in order to be a man."* More than ever is this his supreme concern today. What an extraordinary being he is—marvelous in his proven accomplishments, mysterious in his unfulfilled possibilities! Can we, by clearer insight into how he came to be where he now is and what he may become, play our part in turning his greatest peril into his greatest opportunity?

* E. F. Buchner, *The Educational Theory of Immanuel Kant*. J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia and New York, 1904, p. 236.

CHAPTER I

The Great Historical Transformation

The Great Historical Transformation

More than one route can be chosen in the quest for a perceptive understanding of man. May all appealing routes be tried, and show what each can achieve! The route I have found most illuminating assumes that life is ever in dynamic evolution, so that all problems about man and his prospects for the future can be most fruitfully met by a historical quest. If we are to understand him as on an adventurous journey, this is a natural route to take.

But one who embarks on such a quest must not fall into a grave mistake made in many portrayals of man—they view him in a span of time much too narrow for adequate understanding. He has existed, as we now know, well over a million years, perhaps two million. Happily for our purpose, the greater part of that lengthy period need not be surveyed. But to understand him we do need to detect the long-run forces at work in his evolution. Man has ever been striving to relate himself successfully to the manifold realities that surround him, and there is a very impressive difference between how he did this eight thousand years or more ago and how all save a few do it today. Humanity has come only a short distance out of the arduous struggles of primitive life, but it is far enough to teach instructive lessons about the varied potencies of man, realizable through the millenniums to come. It makes possible a calm and careful comparison of ourselves with our primitive forebears, by which the main forces at work are sharply revealed. A view of man that only takes account of what he appears to be at the present time and the recent past is like a geological theory that limits its study to the now visible formation of the earth's crust, or a pre-evolutionary theory of the biological species living today. We need to watch him evolving from one mode of existence to another, and thus to stretch our minds over an extended span of time. To do this in trustworthy fashion is hard. Most of the time people live in a short-run perspective, and their habits of

thinking are largely determined by that fact. But when anyone perceives how the long-run forces vitally affect his life for weal or woe, he will take them into account, living and thinking thereafter in a more capacious perspective.

1

So let us concentrate on this 8000-year period, which to many looks long but on the scale of human history is exceedingly brief. By doing so we can see the radical change that has taken place from tribal life to the first stages in the building of civilization. Any shorter span of time would be too short. The story of this period in man's history has often been told, but a reminder of its most significant development is essential to our purpose.

The epoch around 6000 B. C., which provides a base in the past for this comparison, was a late segment of the Neolithic age. At that time the earliest Sumerian and Egyptian civilizations were not yet clearly in evidence, although the processes leading to them could no doubt be detected if one knew what to look for. But the men living then were essentially like men of today in their physiological structure and mental capacity. Language for oral communication was already well developed. The domestication of animals and plants had reached the point now familiar. Tribes had scattered over much of the land surface of the earth and had successfully adjusted to a wide variety of natural resources and climatic conditions. A number of settled agricultural and herd-raising societies had arisen and were maintaining themselves season after season.

We may be strongly tempted to view those distant forebears condescendingly from our more "enlightened" stance. But that would be a mistake. It would inhibit our entering their living experience, so as to realize how they looked at life and the world. Our outlook today is very different, but it has grown out of theirs. To understand them and ourselves we must perceive how that radical change came about. This is a formidable task. But with the various aids available from archeology, historical records, studies of existing primitive societies, and observations of young children, we can put ourselves sufficiently in their place to gain a comprehensive and on the whole trustworthy insight into how our precivilized ancestors felt and thought.

2

Suppose then that we were traveling over the earth eight thousand years ago. What would we discover about the way people lived and how they interpreted the world they found themselves in ?

Much variety in detail from region to region would be evident. But certain features of tribal life and tribal thinking would be perceived almost everywhere. Each social unit is small as compared with many organized units today ; it is much more like a clan than a nation. We find men and women living in caves, huts, or tents. To provide food they are picking nuts and berries, grubbing for roots, hunting animals, fishing, herd-raising, and engaging in simple forms of agriculture. Whatever food they manage to get is soon consumed, except that in agricultural societies seeds are hoarded for the next season's planting and in the colder climes supplies are stored to carry them through the winter. Here and there we come upon societies especially favored by their natural surroundings, but except in minor ways they do not seem to profit by such an opportunity as a civilized society does. As for the groups not so favored, their major and pressing preoccupation seems to be that of meeting the elemental needs of existence under the recurring threat of drought, storm, famine, epidemics of disease, swarms of insects, forays of hungry animals, or sudden attacks by other tribes. This is not the whole picture, however ; at times in almost every society there is felt a sense of happy harmony with nature and with the invisible powers behind it.

How about primitive man's social life ?

Within any tribal village there will be clearly defined roles due to sex and age ; there are usually some distinctions of social status also. For the most part each person knows his role, and in filling it he is moved by a pervasive loyalty to his tribe.

Between one such society and others there may be little contact, even if they are neighbors. The amount and form of trading interchange varies considerably. Two or more societies may on occasion come together for ceremonial festivities or combine their forces in a hunting expedition. Otherwise they regard one another as outsiders. Each tribe zealously defends its own territory. Occasional raids take place by members of one tribe on others, but they are mostly for a limited purpose—to avenge an injury to a fellow tribesman, to capture a source of magical power, to steal away some attractive booty. Aggressive tribes

appear in some regions and may be a serious threat to their neighbors, but they lack the wherewithal to maintain control over a much larger area than they already occupy. Should any group find life too difficult in its accustomed habitat, it can usually escape by moving elsewhere—if necessary, to regions in the far north or south where no one else is willing to settle.

What a difference between this way of living and the way civilized men take for granted today ! A similar survey at present would find them organized in large empires, nations, or alliances of nations, which have spread their control over most of the earth's surface. A few isolated pockets of tribal life remain in each continent, having been protected thus far by fortunate circumstance. But the persistent expansion of civilized societies is rapidly putting an end to that protection. In those societies a much more varied pattern of social life is exhibited, reflecting the diverse functions that people in civilization fill—political, economic, professional, scientific, ecclesiastical, educational—and the complex network of relations thus arising between them. The most outstanding occurrence in human history to date is surely the transition from a tribal mode of existence to this strikingly different mode in all but insignificant areas of the world.

Such a description of man's evolution is doubtless defective. What we would call civilized life may in some regions have begun earlier than 6000 B. C., and the transition to it was very gradual. But one must never forget that any needed qualifications do not annul the fact that humanity has undergone this momentous transition—that man's life today radically diverges from what it was in primitive times. He cannot be adequately understood without taking full account of that difference.

3

How shall we explain this remarkable change ? That it happened was due to no compelling external force. Men and women could have continued to cling to their tribal ways had the wish to do so been sufficiently strong and widespread. Why didn't they ?

The concept of "need" can help us in answering this question. What is it that makes history, if not the pressure of people's needs, and their unflagging effort to find ways of satisfying them ? Let us scrutinize human needs for a moment. There are individual needs, varying from person to person. There are special needs of each organized group.

There are universal needs, present at all times and places, such as the needs for food, for sex, for shelter, for companionship. Also a hierarchy of needs can be perceived, the "higher" ones manifesting their strength when the elemental ones are dependably satisfied. The need to create objects of beauty lies in abeyance when the need for food and drink is pressing, but when the latter is sufficiently met some persons will respond to the creative urge and pursue the role of an artist.

In our quest for a reliable understanding of man, however, with the contrast in mind between his life at 6000 B.C. and his life today, certain needs not yet mentioned may be uniquely enlightening. They dominate life at a certain stage of his history, and they remain dominant for a long time because a successful way of meeting them is only gradually learned. During much of the time when people are struggling to satisfy such a need, its effective presence is not recognized, because they are absorbed in the practical problem of learning how to meet it. But when its decisive role is recognized, a wide range of thought and action can be fruitfully understood as expressing a persistent effort to meet it.

Two needs of this kind can be rather confidently discerned. One of them people had been striving to satisfy from the very beginning of their existence. It is the need to grasp and be ready to meet the forces at work in the physical world, inanimate and animate, sufficiently to win an assured position in relation to them. Until about 6000 B.C. this was the insistent problem almost everywhere. Men were seeking to realize the conditions under which they could survive in the presence of the mysterious forces in nature. As some societies after long effort succeeded in solving this problem, a second need gradually became as insistent as the first had been. This is the need for each group of men and women to learn how to live with other groups on our small planet, and the challenge of that need has today only begun to be met. It became urgent because the technology by which physical nature was increasingly mastered thrust people into steadily expanding interaction with each other. That interaction is now the most striking fact about human life.

These needs are uniquely important for a very simple reason. Man's continued existence depends on meeting them ; if he fails, he does not survive, and is therefore not in a position to satisfy any other need or to realize any of his appealing aspirations.

Such persistent needs seem to be the major forces determining the course of history when viewed in broad perspective and, if so, human

thinking is basically determined by the challenge to clarify them and to win dependable knowledge of the realities involved in satisfying them. Man's evolution can be instructively viewed as a succession of such major needs and the ways he adopts of meeting them. An interesting corollary of such a view is this : One may predict that in time another comparable need will arise, but the world has not yet progressed far enough in meeting the second so that a plausible forecast can be made as to what the next one will be.

Concurrent with these two needs is a vital need of a different kind. In the midst of shifting earthly events, men have felt a growing aspiration to realize harmony with an Ultimate Reality. This perennial aspiration can be sensed through all phases of experience, primitive or civilized. The degree and form of this quest makes a profound difference to a person's total orientation toward life, and especially to how he responds to the second need—to live in cooperation with his fellows.

Thus surveyed, history naturally divides into two main periods. They overlap, because some societies advance into the situation dominated by the second need while others are still striving to master the forces of physical nature. I shall continue to call the first period that of "primitive" life and the second that marked by the emergence of "civilized" culture. Half a century ago these were biased words, but they can express an unbiased description of major stages in man's evolution.

4

Our fundamental question about primitive man then takes this form : Why did his way of perceiving life and the world not continue to be acceptable ? What made him embark on the quest for civilization ?

To answer reliably one must portray primitive man's science, his art, his moral ideas, and his religious orientation so as to reveal their virtues and their serious inadequacies.

Take his science first. All that we know about precivilized man's way of explaining the processes going on around him seems to indicate that it reflected relatively uncriticized emotional projections instead of awareness of their regular laws. The essential categories (*i.e.*, basic concepts) of his thinking might be expressed by the words "causality," "power," and "happening" ; and he took for granted a distinction between

commonplace happenings and those of serious moment. Commonplace happenings did not arouse his concerned attention, because he felt no doubt that they would continue to happen as they had. Streams would always flow downhill, and leaves would rustle in the breeze. But more significant happenings—those affecting his life for weal or woe and yet whose outcome could not be confidently forecast—were a matter of grave concern.

As he tried to understand them, the category of "causality" filled a central role, but he employed it in a way that civilized men have almost left behind. He typically believed, it appears, that every significant happening is caused by some mysterious power either located in it or working through it, whose mode of operation is advantageous to him or the opposite. Its character reflects the fears and hopes in which he perceives it. For example, he saw in the rain not only water descending from the sky like any falling object—a feature arousing no anxiety—but also a strange power that could not be counted on; sometimes it fell gently and frequently through a long growing season, but it might fail entirely for months at a stretch or pour down in violent storms that destroyed his crops. He perceived the prominent but as yet enigmatic aspects of nature as the operating theater of these mysterious powers. His animistic presuppositions about such powers are still shown in the language used today: civilized people speak of the sun "rising," the sea as "calm," the storm as "raging," the epidemic of disease as "attacking."

Take his religious orientation next, for it is not separable from his science. Primitive man recognized divine powers of many kinds; they include ancestral heroes, living chiefs or shamans, the source of fertility in animals or plants, and often some quite mythical beings. But a very instructive part of his religion, to us, expressed his way of dealing with the powers at work in the natural processes vital to his welfare. By magical acts and incantations, or by humble petitions, he sought to win their favor and avert their disfavor. Rituals, sacrifices, and other performances suggested by his wish to please them were adopted and then perpetuated by tradition. The impulse underlying any form of magic is clearly revealed in an address to the sun at the end of the rainy season in New Caledonia, accompanied by the kindling of a fire: "Sun! I do this so that you will be burning hot, and eat up all the clouds in the sky."

As for the moral ideas of primitive man, he lived under a set of rules which assured respect for the customary rights of his fellow tribesmen, but hardly more than an inkling had dawned that strangers might

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be regarded as other than potential enemies, to be treated as an alien force when any conflict arose. As for art, it took many forms ; among other things it caught and dramatized the behavior of creatures important to man, or vividly celebrated the various modes of activity in which he from time to time engaged.

This way of viewing life and meeting its demands, once practically universal, can be observed today in the tribes that still exist in areas where the impact of civilization has not yet been seriously felt. Because of its many inadequacies no civilized person would seriously wish to return to it.

Civilized life began to appear in its distinctive character when enough of the rudiments of science and technology had been gained so that, in the groups achieving this mastery, man's anxious apprehension of the natural forces around him began to fade away. In the great valleys of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and farther East, more food could be produced through improved know-how than men needed despite burgeoning population, and a political organization evolved which ruled the subdued masses of people from a center of royal power. The ruler maintained his authority by the support of priestly seers who became the earliest experts in astronomy and mathematics. In those fields a new kind of knowledge was won. The seers observed the dependable regularity in the motions of the heavenly bodies, and could forecast with increasing success their future behavior. They learned how to measure time and space much more accurately than their predecessors. A lengthy era of preoccupation with this kind of knowledge ensued before the basic principles of civilized science could be clearly grasped and formulated. In fact, that stage probably did not come until the beginnings of modern science, except for some anticipations by Greek, Roman, and Eastern thinkers.

But it did come. So the primitive orientation toward nature has slowly given way to the orientation of civilized science—which presupposes that the world humanity inhabits is the scene of predictable regularities which man is capable of discovering and using for his purposes. This was the vital change. Through it the worrisome uncertainty revealed in primitive magic and petitions was gradually replaced by the confident feeling that man can learn how to assure himself the resources on which continued existence depends. His technicians invented the needed tools and devised reliable methods for providing a sufficient food supply, season after season ; usually he could be sure of protection against cold,

heat, and wild animals ; safeguards were developing against many other major threats that had rendered life precarious and the future insecure.

Thus the first major need of man in the course of his history was successfully met. As this success was reliably achieved, leaders in every area of life could give time and thought to other concerns that had either not yet emerged or could not attract serious attention because of the peremptory nature of that primary need. And one of those concerns proved fully as urgent and difficult as the major concern of primitive man had been. But it was different ; it involved the relations of persons and societies with each other.

A central aspect of the great historical transformation is then this : While the fundamental insecurity of primitive man lay in his dependence on physical nature, the fundamental insecurity of civilized man lies in his dependence on other men. As an inescapable consequence, the second basic need has become as peremptory now as the first need was in primitive life. The formidable and perplexing problem is : How can the various groups of human beings that civilized life throws into increasingly complicated interdependence learn to live together ? Some might think that the ecological peril looming starkly before civilized man today indicates that he is more dependent still on his natural environment than he thinks he is. But inspect that peril carefully. Does it not reflect a socio-moral failure ? All would be well if our energetic interaction with environing nature were guided by a quest for the long run and universal good instead of a short-run advantage to this or that limited group.

In thus viewing the great historical transformation, we will not forget that the common people in a civilized society always lag behind their leaders ; the pressing concern of peasants and laborers is still to have enough food, shelter, and other necessities. But the intelligent leaders, who give any culture its dominant character, are now preoccupied with problems growing out of the second need.

5

What have been man's gravest handicaps in meeting those basic needs, and what major resources have been available in his efforts to meet them ?

Considering the handicaps first, let us probe the most obvious one by observing the form it has taken under each of these needs.

Primitive man viewed his environing world as a theater in which mysterious powers are at work, either favoring or frustrating his quest for the necessities and boons of continued existence. Why did he view it thus ? Why did he not see that this way of interpreting the world is deceptive, and proceed at once to discover reliable truths about the processes going on around him ?

I offer this answer : Man's way of perceiving and interpreting any object is profoundly influenced by his feelings about it, especially feelings of fear and hope, and only slowly does he learn to correct the resulting mistakes. For a long time our ancestors perceived all objects in the framework of such emotional forces, only meagerly corrected by the lessons experience can teach.

If this answer appears doubtful, look at the frequent reminders among civilized adults of these potent forces. An apparently well-established orientation can be overcome by powerful emotion. A man today who for years has not prayed may pray fervently for recovery from a serious illness. Special church services may be held in a time of severe drought. When a child is born with some deformity, the distressed mother is apt to feel that it is a punishment by some deity : "What have I done to deserve this ?" In the first two of these cases the control of people's thinking by fear is transient. As soon as recovery comes or a good rain falls, the individual or group will revert to its habitual adult orientation. In the third case the daily presence of the deformed child makes that reversion more difficult, and the poignant question may continue to haunt the apprehensive mother.

But during the long epoch before a civilized orientation had been gained by anyone, a person would have no resource by which to realize that he had been swayed by unreliable emotion. All his perceiving and interpreting would inevitably be controlled by whatever feelings are dominant at the time. Even the words in which he would describe any experience will express those feelings, for as yet he has no others to use. His world is a world dominated by mysterious powers and shaped by their doings.

When history is surveyed in this panoramic setting, it is easy to understand how primitive man's view of objects and processes in nature reflects mental associations that vividly arise in an unsophisticated perceiver instead of the more reliable causal relations of which he has not yet become aware. Civilized men still project under the influence of these

associations when especially strong emotions are aroused. A tornado that levels a house can be sensed as a demonic power.

Turn now to the form taken by this handicap in the situation dominated by man's second basic need—the need to learn how to live successfully with his fellows.

Driven by the persistent force of emotional projection on everything with which he interacts, man perceives his fellows in the setting of his own hopes and fears. A statesman sees the head of a foreign government as a stranger capable of living with him in peace or of forcing him and his people into war. An employee sees his employer largely as an uncertain power that can promote or fire him ; a suitor sees his lady love as a charming beauty who can assure him bliss or plunge him into misery. And the special new factor confronted today in this second historical period arises from the fact that modern means of communication have thrown people all over the world into increasing interaction with each other and dependence on one another.

It is as hard for persons today to discern the active presence of these emotions, with their unfortunate effects, as it was for our primitive forebears to discern the influence of their emotions toward physical objects.

Why is it so hard ?

Facing this question, one needs to appreciate the new social situation engirding people in their pursuit of civilized values. In the case of primitive man the clan or tribe, which constitutes his social group, is essentially an extension of the family. It is a small group, and its members are constantly aware that they belong together. The good of the tribe, by and large, is felt to be the good of each person in it. Disputes between members arise and antagonisms appear, but normally they are encompassed by the sense of kinship which this feeling fosters. Other members are looked upon as natural allies ; all are bound together by their common blood. But with the bigger and more complex groups that arise in the course of expanding civilization this is no longer the case. The sense of belonging together is absent at first, and only comes into being feebly and slowly.

That the quandary thus created is gravely threatening even within the boundaries of any civilized society is obvious. Glance at neighbors in a modern city, who live close together but have no strong sense of any common interest. The crux of their predicament is vividly shown by a

group crowded into a subway car ; they jostle against each other and are dependent for life and death on the same forces, but feel nothing that really binds them together. In emotional terms they are alien to each other. The heart of the acute and persistent predicament, as civilization evolves, is that people have to get along in some measure of harmonious cooperation with those whom they feel to be alien, while anyone thus viewed is for that reason feared and distrusted.

No wonder that sub-groups within a civilized society fight each other for temporary advantage—business associations, labor unions, professional societies, neighborhood cliques, teen-age gangs, political parties, and others. When their nation is not engaged in war, these struggles can be intense and even ruinous. Often the requisite degree of cooperation within a society is secured only at the cost of making some outside group—which can therefore be zealously hated by all alike—a scapegoat for the frustrations and animosities inevitably arising. So it is not surprising that, in the increasingly provocative relation with people outside one's own society, such feelings are especially strong. Between any person inside and those people outside there are obstructive barriers—of language, race, religion, ideology. The sense of threatening strangeness thus generated makes it almost impossible to see any facts not in accord with one's dominant emotion. To be sure, some of the outsiders share a common ancestry and culture with him ; in their case this feeling of strangeness is partially overcome, for often they are needed as allies against the others with whom there is no such common bond. But he readily views those others as sinister aliens, and projects on them without much restraint his angry and anxious emotions.

Look at the outstanding illustration of this plight today—the cleavage of a large part of the civilized world into Communist and anticommunist regions. The dedicated Communist views the West as ruled by wicked capitalists ; everything important that happens in it he sees as an expression of greed, exploitation, and hypocrisy. The fanatical anti-communist responds in kind, and just as completely ; behind every move of the communist leaders he perceives a diabolical aim to bring the whole world under their mastery. The distortions thus arising are huge and perilous. The chief peril is that, instead of perceiving accurately the main realities before them and anticipating the effects of present moves that are actually probable, both participants compulsively foresee outcomes reflecting their fears and suspicions. They endeavor to guard against these outcomes instead of those that are really taking form ; and hopeful possibilities—of collaboration and better understanding—may be missed entirely. As I write, many Americans watch the present military

preparations in the Soviet Union with much anxiety, failing to notice the frequent tokens of a strong desire for peace with America, and to realize the importance of taking no step that would strengthen the Soviet militarists.

In this setting, war between civilized peoples can be readily understood. Since the surface of the earth is finite, sooner or later two expanding nations come into conflict. Each aggressively seeks control of an area which both think they need for their safety and prosperity, and its rulers feel an ambitious urge to extend their power. At first these martial struggles were geographically limited, but they gradually involved a larger and larger region. Today—such is the sobering destiny of our generation—they have become world wars, from whose impact no people anywhere can expect to remain aloof.

Hence the handicap that most severely obstructed man's effort to solve his first basic problem—viewing everything in the physical world under the influence of warping emotional forces—is likewise the main handicap to a successful solution of the second. The feeling of belonging or not belonging together creates in the relation between civilized societies and rival groups of the same society as fertile a field as primitive men had found in environing nature for the play of unreliable mental images, and for continued difficulty in overcoming their deceptions. The parallel between civilized man's view of his alien fellows and primitive man's view of the physical world—in terms of beneficent or malicious forces at work—is almost perfect.

6

So much for the fundamental handicap. Now for the resources by which men have made some progress in overcoming its limitations and correcting its illusions, so that a more dependable orientation could develop.

Consider this analysis : There were two basic remedial resources : man's indomitable urge for survival, and the capacity to widen his awareness of himself and of surrounding realities. How did these resources become effective ?

Let us put ourselves in the historical situation dominated by the need to know the forces in physical nature. Supported by the constant vigor of the urge for survival, and actively expanding their awareness,

pioneering minds were gradually liberated from the mysterious powers whose presence had been projected by people's deep seated emotions. As a thinker became aware, for instance, of the meteorological regularities that make confident prediction of rain possible, the erratic rain-god of primitive thought faded from his universe. Today, for civilized man, objects on the earth and above it have been largely purged of their supernatural associations ; he perceives all bodies as parts of a natural order in which reliable regularities reign.* Our generation has experienced a vivid example of this radical transformation. Until two or three millennia ago the sun and the moon were regarded as divine beings. Even in ancient Greek and Roman thought they were not yet viewed simply as physical objects. But that is what they have now become. Through widened awareness of the natural world unreliable associations have been step by step left behind. The man or woman who basks in the sun to get well tanned does not picture the sun as a supernatural being. Had this change of orientation failed to occur, men would have been afraid to invade the celestial realm and land on the moon as they did on July 20, 1969. Through widened awareness of themselves as well as of processes outside, people slowly came to recognize the presence of emotional forces, and how they have affected the perception and interpretation of objects. As this lesson is learned, impulsive emotions and the images they project are realized as located in man himself rather than as belonging to the outside world. When the appropriate language is developed, they are described in psychological instead of physical terms.

Who obstructed such forward steps ? Surely, the strict conservatives of that period, who were convinced that the ideas about nature inherited from the past and the practical techniques accompanying them are correct and must be rigidly adhered to lest some disaster befall. Who were the pioneers of progress ? The daring explorers—those who were ready to think and act along new lines that looked promising. And the kind of new thinking then most needed led toward detecting the dependable causal relations between events in nature. Those pioneers noticed with increasing confidence, on the one hand, that an agricultural or hunting enterprise succeeds no better when accompanied by a time-consuming magical rite than without it, and on the other hand that there are certain orderly sequences in the way things happen which, when taken into account, do make a vital difference. Thus the needed revision

* Other forces were at work in this process too. For a brief description of them see Theodore Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends* (New York, Doubleday, 1972), pp. 373-f.

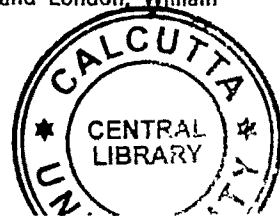
of the primitive concept of causality was in time achieved. Temporal sequences in nature were discovered whose detection makes it possible for future events to be successfully predicted on the basis of events now observed, and even controlled wherever control proves feasible. Such sequences were freed from earlier emotional projections and took the place of the supposed causal action of mysterious powers.

In short, the pursuit we now describe as the quest for scientific and technical knowledge was the effective solution of the first basic problem man faced. Its adequacy for this purpose has become increasingly obvious through the centuries. It does not free our thinking about nature from emotional forces, but the strong wish for dependable regularity has largely overcome primitive hopes and fears. So one should not be surprised to find many clearly visible links between scientific knowledge and the ancient past. The fact that science arose out of primitive thinking about environing forces, as a dependable way of revising it, is attested by many details of its evolution. The science of anatomy appears to have originated in the practice of divination by examining the liver and entrails of an animal, and the science of astronomy in early man's astrological concern about the stars and their bearing on his welfare.*

No lengthy looking is necessary to see the same two remedial resources actively present in man's endeavor to meet the second historical need—the need to live successfully with his fellows. Let us ignore briefly the first resource—his urge for survival and reflect on the second—his capacity for widened awareness. This seems clearly to be the resource by which, in any epoch of any society, he gradually corrects the errors into which he has fallen. What form does that wider awareness take when it guides him toward a way of meeting the second need?

Consider if this is a sound answer: One who exemplifies it learns slowly the difficult art of putting himself in the place of other persons, so that he senses their actual feelings and aims. A man who has been angry at his next-door neighbor for erecting a structure that cuts off a pleasant view may come to see that he would have done the same in his neighbor's place. One who thus puts himself in the place of another man gains thereby a larger perspective on the forces at work in the interaction of people with each other. In that larger perspective he

* See S. Reinach, *Orpheus* (New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, and London, William Heinemann, 1909), pp. 36 f.



distinguishes between the reality in another person and the emotions in himself that he has projected on that person.

A more general lesson emerges from this example. One can come to perceive the extent to which wishes and hopes have affected his perception of people whom he feels to be friendly while fear and hate have affected his perception of those he feels to be alien. In time he realizes that the object of the friendliness or hostility is neither beneficent nor hostile but that the persons perceived had appeared so because of the emotions through which they were viewed. However, to learn this lesson may take a long time. And a special difficulty must be overcome that has no parallel in man's relation to the physical environment. When a person acts in anger or suspicion he arouses similar feelings in the other people around him so that their response is more perturbing than before, whereas external nature never gets excited by his attitude toward it.

Think now of the other vital resource behind all the progress man achieves—namely, his perennial drive for self-preservation. When this drive is mentioned, one is apt to have in mind personal self-preservation in a situation where his own life is in danger. But from the very beginning of man's career—indeed the career of life in lower forms—another dimension of self-preservation has been far more important. Through a deep-rooted awareness that his own good depends on the good of the group to which he belongs, every person's primary commitment is to the preservation of that group; only if he is ready to sacrifice his individual life for the sake of that larger whole is continued existence for members of the group possible. However, a significant change in this readiness had to come when man passed from the setting of primitive life to the ever more complex setting of civilization.

When it simply meant acting so as to preserve the clan or tribe, an easy extension of one's natural family-feeling is all that was called for. But once man ventured beyond this primitive pattern in his quest for the values of civilized life, he faced the need of an emotional foundation for survival in that radically altered situation. And it gradually has taken form.

Everyone is familiar with the emotional unity achieved by the emergence and strength of nationhood. Look at the sense of national belonging we call "patriotism". A visitor to central Africa today finds its people in the difficult stage of passing from the narrow loyalty of village and tribe toward that of the larger nation which in its present

shape has been artificially carved out of the heritage from European colonization. Nationalism is a flagrant evil when it blocks progress toward international unity, but when one watches it gradually replacing tribal and local loyalties with their perilously divisive effects he sees that it is a constructive stage in social evolution. Wherever a potent sense of nationhood has been established, the individual is expected to sacrifice his life—even the life of any smaller group to which he belongs—for the preservation of his nation. The world today is slowly going through that stage.

But the process of unification does not stop at this point. Men are coming to realize that the nation is no longer a viable unit for survival. Driven by the same persistent forces that have brought the world to its present degree of consolidation, nations and other groups are fumbling their way toward the formation of larger units. Thus far, the alliances entered have been easily broken, and most of them may prove quite transitory. But it is reasonable to expect that, although relapses and divisive forces will be evident from time to time, the trend thus revealed is not transitory. The feeling that people belong together does grow and spread, despite the counteracting forces. It may be that this trend is best shown in the nonpolitical forms of union—those revealed in religion, education, science, and the arts. These too transcend the limitations of tribal life. Viewing the course of history over the ages, an evolution can be seen from distrustful dividedness, with its severe handicaps to a fully human life, toward ever more inclusive social units.

At what point will the process end? In an important sense it will never end, for time and the future have no end. But in the setting we now have in mind an answer is at hand in the fact that the human race is already bound together in a single network of interaction and intercommunication. No sign of a decisive reversal in this trend is visible, despite the backslidings. Hence, once the tribal pattern has been irrevocably left behind, how can an enduring emotional foundation be established short of a living sense of oneness with all people everywhere? Any partial achievement in this direction would be intrinsically unstable. Only a community of all mankind will clearly exemplify dependable self-preservation on the surface of this planet. Since such a community is not dead but living, it will continue from time to time to revise its basic values and aspirations; however, one menacing threat to its future existence will have been conquered.

Now for a crucial question. How can an all-embracing sense of oneness with our fellows be realized? What forces are working to establish the needed emotional bond?

There are several forces, each slowly fostering this realization as intercommunication steadily expands over the earth. Increasing travel is one. Economic trade is another ; profitable interchange of goods and services entices men strongly, and in the process some appreciation of the real concerns of the strangers they are dealing with is gained. Problems about the production and distribution of oil are today a vivid example. Diplomatic relations and international conferences of scientists, philosophers, and educational leaders are slowly enlarging men's awareness of the viewpoint of people with different interests and a different culture.

However, the wider fellow-feeling produced by such forces is weak. It can be quickly overcome in times of heightened tension by the powerful divisive urges in man. Were there no other force, the future of civilization would look very gloomy. But another force has been at work and is growing in strength—a force that directly fosters a feeling of unity with all people and is often able to create it where it does not already exist. It shows vividly that the need of men to learn how to live together and the equally insistent need for contact with Divine Reality are intrinsically bound together.

Who are the best exemplars of this force ?

They are the pioneers of the living civilized religions, who began to appear around the seventh century before Christ. The founder of the last religion to achieve wide success—Mohammed—filled his pioneering role in the seventh century after Christ. In those rare men, and the followers in later generations who most fully imbibed their spirit, a new energy is revealed. Their greatness is shown in the fact that only the institutions growing out of their character and vision have endured through subsequent centuries and are still vigorous in our day. Other social structures in the ancient world that were expected to endure—political, economic, legal, educational—have one and all passed away. This fact is a searching challenge to everyone who wishes to understand man.

When referring to the "living civilized religions", I have in mind Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism.* Their pioneers are the men who most closely correspond, in the epoch dominated by the second basic need, to the forerunners of science in the preceding epoch. As the daring investigators of the

* Zoroastrianism and Judaism are included because, although they do not number vast millions among their present adherents, they have profoundly influenced the other civilized religions.

physical world correct man's unfortunate projections in that realm, so the pioneers of civilized religion have been correcting his unfortunate projections on other men. Science and religion, which sometimes seem opposed, are thus in essential harmony with each other. Scientific and religious pioneers are men like ourselves, moved by the same urges, but they have the insight and strength to be pioneers.

7

Since most people strongly tend to view their own faith as quite different from and superior to other faiths, let us concentrate for a while on what all the great civilized faiths have in common. This can be shown most instructively by comparing them with a typical primitive cult? What important characteristics that seem to be absent from primitive religion are visible in them?

Four characteristics, I believe, stand out clearly when such a comparison is made. First, one that obviously expresses the concern of the great pioneers with man's second historical need—the need of learning how to live with other men. Each civilized faith teaches that men are responsible to all their human fellows, and that divinity must be so conceived as to harmonize with this outlook. No such responsibility, as far as one can see, is recognized by primitive man; the only "moral right" he feels obligated to obey is that which serves the welfare of his group.

The civilized faiths leave that cramping situation behind. A sense of community extending beyond the tribe and embracing every human being begins to be felt. The mysterious powers that had been worshipped are slowly but drastically reconceived in harmony with this ideal. The essence of divinity henceforth lies in its being the source and support of man's aspiration for world-wide brotherhood against the resistance of the tribal elements that still linger in him. When such a reconception has taken form, a man cannot reverence powers whose nature conflicts with this aspiration; they can no longer be divinities for him. "If the gods", declared Euripides, "do aught that is base, they are no gods".* The transition to this orientation strengthens the emphasis on Heaven as a divine power. Heaven gradually becomes the most important divinity, or its special seat in the cosmos.

* In his *Bellerophon*, Fragment 292.

The second characteristic of these faiths is a strong trend toward monism in their conception of divinity and of the universe. Primitive man believes in the existence of many divine powers, each operating more or less independently of the others. Hence for him there is no single order pervading the whole universe. And even in such civilized societies as ancient Greece and Rome, whose keenest minds had envisioned one cosmic order behind all things, religion (except among the philosophers) was not quite ready for this monistic view; Zeus or Jupiter was the highest among the gods, but he could not control the activities of his colleagues in the areas under their sway.

The civilized religions that still live, however, are explicitly monistic. They hold that only one ultimate power exists and one all-embracing cosmic reality—a conviction essential to science and to philosophy. This transformation was strongly aided by the increasing emphasis on Heaven. There is only one Heaven, and the sun, moon, and stars exemplify in their motions a uniform order. Of course, this monism took different forms in the various civilized faiths. Most familiar to the Western world is the theistic form in which a single personal God is recognized whose all-controlling purpose is fulfilled through history.

The third characteristic is a realization by the civilized religions that every person has a "soul", whose nature is in harmony with the two characteristics just described. Primitive man does not lack the concept of soul, but he typically thinks of it as a material entity or process in the body of a living organism. The word for soul in many languages originally meant "breath"—the process that most vividly marks the difference between a living and a dead body.

Civilized religion abandons this physical concept of soul. For it, man's soul is manifested in his sense of widened moral responsibility and of an ethical Deity, with the deepened aspiration accompanying it. In the Western religions this replacement was achieved by a revision in the concept of "spirit", with its adjective "spiritual". "Spirit" too originally meant "breath", but in the later prophets and the New Testament it refers to man's capacity to envision a worldwide brotherhood, and to follow the will of God who is now conceived to be the source of that vision.

As a consequence of this transformation, the civilized religions perceive that man's soul is invisible and hence is a nonmaterial entity. That perception underlies the distinction in civilized philosophy between material and spiritual (or mental) reality.

The fourth characteristic is an awareness that man's true happiness does not consist simply in the satisfaction of what we may call his natural desires. Such satisfaction seems to be the essence of happiness for primitive man ; except vaguely, he does not know happiness in any other form. The pioneers of civilized religion learned that those desires are profoundly transformed by growing sensitivity to the spiritual ideal. Thus, through their influence, civilized man slowly becomes acquainted with a different kind of well-being than was familiar to his primitive forebears. Responsive persons come to distinguish between happiness as a medley of natural pleasures and happiness that fulfills one's moral and spiritual endowment ; to describe the latter, such words as "joy", "rapture", and "bliss" are needed.

The pioneers were sure that this fulfillment is man's supreme good, and they were also sure that it is open to everyone. Such an assurance explains their hopeful attitude toward life. They were aware of the evils that torment the world, but at the heart of their message was the buoyant conviction that it is "good news"—news that a great consummation is possible for all men. When a person's inner self is reborn as theirs had been he can meet with strength and joy whatever might happen. Just before Jesus was arrested and put to death he is quoted as saying to his disciples, "I have told you these things so that you might have the joy I have had, and that your joy might be complete."*

The Buddha is reported to have said :

"We live happily indeed, not hating those who hate us,
Among men who hate let us dwell free from hatred."

"We live happily indeed, though we call nothing our own."†

As the influence of such spiritual leaders spread, the satisfactions people had been pursuing came gradually to appear very meager when compared with the more rewarding and reliable happiness shown by them to be possible

8

But the great pioneers are easily misunderstood. Many thinkers identify them with long-outmoded doctrines about history and the

* John 15 : 11. Note the more general joyful message in Chapter 10 : 10 of the same gospel : "I came that you might have life, and might have it abundantly."

† The *Dhammapadam*, Ch. XV.

universe. Those who avoid this mistake may picture them as simply preaching that men ought to love one another. They did so preach, but merely to fill that role would be like telling people in a cold and gloomy room that they ought to feel warm and cheerful. The pioneers brought warmth and cheer into the room, and they did this by their example. Their message would have been impotent were it not a clarifying accompaniment of the magnetic fellow-feeling that spread from them into the lives of others.

Reflect in this setting on the main ways in which we are treated by the people we meet. There are some to whom we are a nuisance—who obviously would like to be rid of us. There are others who are more tolerant; their motto is "Live and let live". Besides these two groups there are those who fully accept us, with our virtues and our vices; and in this last group there are a few who do more than accept us. They make us feel that we are a boon in their universe—that our being here adds something without which life for them would be poorer. Who are these? Chiefly, our dear mates and close friends. But from time to time a rare person appears who responds in this way to everyone he meets. Such persons uniquely bless the human journey and lead it forward.

The spiritual pioneers thus far best exemplify this unreserved open-heartedness. Their sensitivity reaches out to embrace all their fellows. Distinctions of race, nation, culture, or status become irrelevant. And their humane outreach, though not perfect, satisfies such a strong and persistent longing that it continues to live and spread more widely, irrespective of other happenings in the course of history. Because they so closely exemplified the ideal of healthy civilized humanity, religion under their guidance has taken a decisive step toward an enduring solution of man's second basic need, as the developing orientation of science led to an enduring solution of the first. When it strays away from their example, it becomes a divisive instead of a unifying force.

Thinkers are not accustomed to view them as great explorers. But perhaps that is their primary role in history. Just as other adventurous men roam over the vast geography of the earth or brave as scientists the hitherto occult forces in matter and the perils of surrounding space, just as the artist reconnoiters new ways of perceiving the world, so the pioneering adventurers of civilized religion have dared to explore the mysterious nature of man. Delving beneath the deceptive surface of his current experience, they probed his hidden capacities—for demandingness and acceptance, indulgence and restraint, anxiety and trust, fear and

hope, hate and love, despair and joy, ready responsiveness to life and protective withdrawal from it. Through this fearless and arduous venture they could open a path to the liberating fulfillment thus won. By pursuing it they discovered that human nature is far richer, more tangled and tempestuous and also more fertile and creative, than had been recognized before. Their distinctive achievement has been to realize in themselves and awaken in others the profound transformation thus brought about—the transformation of persons at the dynamic core of their selfhood.

But progress at this deep level is slow. As these religions passed on to new generations, their converts compromised with the ways of the world around them, and some of those compromises have been very serious. Look in this regard at the first of the four characteristics—insistence that each person has a moral responsibility toward all persons. Here, a glaring compromise is obvious. All but a few members of a modern society believe and act as though loyalty to their nation is superior to their moral obligation to all men ; in any conflict with a foreign country most Christians, for example, will assume that it is their duty to support the narrow interest of their own nation. Indeed, loyalty to a much smaller gang, clique, or neighborhood can easily become stronger than the claim of any wider obligation.

Despite this dismal shortcoming, civilized life and thought today are quite different from what they would have been without these faiths. Pause over the outstanding differences. The intuition of a single unified order pervading the universe, on which science and philosophy could develop, was gained through them, and the human soul was freed from its primitive identification with a physical process such as breathing. Man's nature was perceived as capable of a far richer well-being than primitive man could experience, and a growing number have realised that well-being. Even the vision of universal brotherhood as a moving ideal, though weak, has not been lost ; in every generation persons have arisen who fully accepted it and strove to reshape social life in its light.

The religious pioneers are the awe-inspiring heroes of history—more than the successful generals or the famous rulers, even more than the great thinkers. In the long run, spiritual leadership fills the most decisive role on the human journey.

"All parts away for the progress of souls ; all religion, all solid things, arts, governments—all that was or is apparent upon this globe or any globe, falls into niches and corners before the procession of souls along the grand roads of the universe."*

* From Walt Whitman's "Song of the Open Road".

CHAPTER II

Emotion, Awareness, and Valuation

Emotion, Awareness, and Valuation

What primary forces are disclosed in man's perennial quest for knowledge and understanding ? The psychologists, social scientists, and physiologists are telling us all that they have learned about those forces. What indispensable illumination can a historical approach add, with its long run perspective ?

The preceding chapter offers this answer : Through it we realize that at any given time, whether under the conditions of primitive life or those of progress toward civilization, man perceives and interprets every reality he faces under the powerful influence of the feelings active in his mind at that time, and he continues to meet it thus till he becomes aware that certain features of the perception or interpretation reflect something in him rather than in the object or person he is facing. Then he perceives and interprets in that fuller awareness. Such progress is gained from time to time. Thus over the centuries improved knowledge is won about the environing world and about himself. Science plays a major part in that improvement ; an outstanding example is the scientific concept of causality. Primitive man perceives that one happening follows another in time, but it takes much experience and thought to recognize the vital importance of regular temporal sequence and to perceive the causal relation in its terms instead of as the activity of mysterious powers.

1

When awareness is gained that some trait previously supposed to belong to an object reflects the influence of human emotion, that trait is recognized as subjective instead of as existing in the external world.

Look at the disease of malaria, which was long attributed to "swamp miasma." When the part played by mosquitos was discovered, that miasma and its poisonous effect were realized to be a human projection, no longer as existing outside man. After such a change has taken place a person can perceive and interpret more accurately than before both a part of the environing world and himself. The history of thought is replete with illustrations of this progress.

The improvement in man's perceptual and interpretive habits thus won takes two major forms. If the object is a physical thing, one learns to perceive it in its reliable causal connections. Thus a more realistic and complete understanding is won. It is more realistic because in some measure it frees the object from the distortion due to subjective forces. It is more complete because the perceiver has discriminated features that still seem to be genuine properties of the object from those that are not, and sees that those that are not were the product of his own projection. When, to take a more prominent example, regularities in the relation of the sun to man's growing crops are discovered, he can separate those regularities from the fears and hopes dominating his earlier perception of the sun, and can view each factor thus distinguished in its appropriate setting. So his knowledge becomes organized in a more adequate and dependable system than had been possible before.

If the object is another person, he can learn to perceive that person in terms of the qualities and motives actually present in him, recognizing their difference from the feelings in himself which would previously have swayed his perception. A judge, for instance, may come to see that he was more lenient to a well-dressed and well-mannered boy brought before the bench than he had been to an obviously poor boy with a less respectful demeanor. When he is aware of this unjustified discrimination he realizes that his sentence expressed a feeling in himself rather than impartial awareness of the relevant legal evidence. Thus he wins a more realistic and complete understanding of reality in that social situation, and can fill his responsibility as a judge better than before.

In both cases a person learns to distinguish more clearly between subjective emotion and objective fact. Thinkers begin to realize that the emotional forces in themselves and other persons fill a fundamental role in all experience. There is a strong temptation today to believe that we have now outgrown the distorting influence of those forces. But they are with us at every stage of man's evolution. Hence the capacity to distinguish in this way can always be improved, in the scientific setting of today as in the prescientific setting of the past. A scientist does not

escape from his feelings ; if he were to do so his mind would be torpid and he would be unable either to perceive or to think. Because his feelings are actively at work, favoring some perceptions and conclusions more than others, he may at any time confuse objective and subjective as primitive man does, especially when confronting new problems.

The paramount further truth is that, while civilized man has already won in high degree the first form of the needed discrimination, he is still in an early stage of winning the second. The difference between psychological and physical reality is now familiar to him, although the process of mastering it still goes on. Astrological superstitions and magical beliefs exert a lingering influence in modern societies ; for example, many people feel protected when wearing an amulet. But these primitive illusions are slowly fading away. By contrast, man has only begun to distinguish in reliable fashion his own emotions from the comparable forces in his fellows.

Vivid illustrations of the contrast between the two degrees of discrimination quickly appear when one looks for them. No civilized person would believe, as many primitives do, that a dead body casts no shadow. That belief presumably originated in the presupposition that the shadow of a living person is intrinsically connected with the source of life in him. Hence when his life has gone there can be no shadow. But a civilized person, freed from that presupposition, sees clearly that there is a shadow. None the less, he can easily hold beliefs about alien people that are just as fantastic. A Russian citizen may be fully convinced that behind everything in American foreign policy there is a conspiracy in Wall Street, and he calls "brainwashing" what to an American is "education in democracy".

This contrast poses a sobering challenge. For it seems clear that the key to man's survival and progress in our epoch is increased ability to distinguish accurately between the forces moving oneself (or one's primary group, *e.g.*, family, neighborhood, nation, sect, professional organization) in any social interaction and the forces moving other people. Indeed, a decisive factor all through the evolutionary competition for survival has been the relation of a species to other species living in the same environment at the same time. Are its resources superior to theirs ? Can it meet any threat from them ? If so, it has a good chance to survive ; if not, it is likely in the competition with them soon to perish. The dinosaurs presumably would still roam the earth had not creatures arisen better equipped to face the vicissitudes of life than they were with their ponderous might. Those smaller creatures were able to meet

any danger from the dinosaurs more intelligently than the latter were to meet any danger from them.

This is likely to be a decisive factor in the rivalry for survival between human societies today. Is my society more awake and alert than its rivals? Nothing is more vitally required in the quest for understanding than a steadfast awareness that in our interactions with social groups, as in our dealings with physical nature, reality is not so obliging that it will either conform to our present inadequate ways of thinking and acting, or leave us alone. Reality must be accepted and understood as it is, and the feelings, acts, and ideas of other people are a crucially important reality. We ignore these truths at our peril.

Why man has progressed so slowly is now quite understandable. In reaching out to grasp the world around us we at first take for granted the prevailing basic values and presuppositions of our social group. Everything is experienced in their light. Only as serious defects in them arise do they come to be perceived, so that their crucial role in perception and explanation can be consciously realized. At first the language we currently use has no words for them. But as they are perceived and exemplified in thought and action, the needed words appear and take on the appropriate meaning. This has been illustrated in the history of "soul" and "spirit" in primitive and civilized evolution.

2

Here let us pause to survey the human situation. Each of us is born into the world of things and people. As we live in it, any experience is either pleasurable and thus to be prolonged or repeated, or unpleasant and thus to be avoided. We gradually become able to anticipate future experiences and to act under the guidance of such anticipation. Our feelings of pleasure or pain are at first related to people and things close at hand. But as our minds develop we expand in imagination to wider scenes and realize the power to form concepts, using them to guide our growing acquaintance with the world of things around us. When we perceive an object as "food" we can react appropriately to its presence. The persons or things I have come to know, I love or hate, while the unknown I fear; I cannot anticipate what is likely to happen in that hidden arena. But at the same time I am curious about it, and when fear does not wholly possess me I reach out to satisfy my curiosity.

As experience evolves, a person soon needs a general system of thought to provide a dependable orientation on himself and his world. Such a system is implied by the sketch in the previous chapter. We must reflect on the primary concepts that played a central role in that sketch. Are they adequate to our quest for an understanding of man ?

A vital role in the above portrayal of human nature has been given to "emotion". That word in this role arouses resistance among many thinkers, and it does have several disadvantages. With some persons, it may fail to call attention to the vigorous urge to action that is an essential part of the meaning. Not long ago, "instinct", which lacks that disadvantage, could have filled this role, and it may come into use again. But "emotion" has the great virtue of provocatively displaying the non-rational character of the force referred to and thus prods us to avoid the error of assuming that man is more rational and less emotional than he is. "Feeling" can serve now and then as a synonym for "emotion", but it is too general to take its place. A sensation of touch is called a feeling

The trenchant truth that emotion does fill a primary role in human nature is revealed by the constant appearance in all social groups of "personality problems" with the percolating tensions they disclose. In family, business, professional, educational, and other circles such tensions appear day after day, and until they are resolved no group can carry on its activities smoothly. Look at the salesman whose family life is constantly plagued by his taking out on his wife and children the irritation he had repressed when dealing with his customers, or at the petty tyrants who dominate all activity in the narrow region where they have authority. Often these tyrants are too efficient to be banished, but they make life miserable and work less productive for those who are under them. A man who for years had filled a high diplomatic post in the American government was asked what had been the greatest difficulty he met in diplomatic negotiations. Without hesitation he replied : "the ego." He meant that what must be overcome before serious agreements could be reached was the set of strong feelings about themselves in each participant. Those self-centered feelings had to be wheedled if anything important was to be achieved. Many businessmen when seeking a profitable deal have discovered the same truth.

With this ubiquitous and ever active energy vividly in mind, one might describe man as a "seething mass of emotion, hidden much of the time under a cloak of conventional and superficially reasonable

behavior". His perceiving, like other mental activities, is emotion-conditioned. As Nietzsche remarked: "Even in the 'simplest' process of sensation, the emotions dominate."*

The crucial fact left out in such a description is that every normal person is also a center of growing awareness, by which he slowly leaves behind the mistakes into which he falls through the deceptive power of emotion, and becomes more reasonable than he was before. With this phrase, the validity in Aristotle's famous definition of man as "the rational animal" will not be lost. What we call "consciousness" in ourselves and others always includes emotion and some measure of awareness.

A momentous truth about man's capacity for awareness needs to be stressed. He can become aware, not only of the objects around him—material things, living creatures, other men—but also of the emotional energy in himself and the varied ways in which it is expressed. This awareness dawns feebly and develops slowly. It is easy to express a dominant emotion but hard to look squarely at it, and it is easy to employ one's awareness simply to find effective ways of satisfying a strong emotional urge. However, as one grows in awareness he gradually becomes liberated from the urges that are unacceptable. As Spinoza said three centuries ago: "The more an emotion is known to us the more it is without power, and the less the mind is submissive to it."† The trenchant difference brought by such knowledge is that, instead of being simply driven by a strong emotion, one begins to perceive it in relation to other phases of his experience, and will more and more act or think under the guidance of that perception. In time he will reach the point where he becomes aware of a potent urge before it has pushed him into action; thus all such urges can be step by step redirected into harmony with the larger self he is becoming.

To understand clearly and fully the constructive role filled by awareness, the word "expanding" or some synonym is indispensable. Not only can man be aware; he has the very precious capacity to extend the range of his awareness beyond any limit already reached. All people are acquainted with expanding awareness in the form of learning new information; thinkers are acquainted with it as they follow the steady increase of scientific knowledge. But it is easy to forget what a comprehensive capacity it is. One is expanding his awareness whenever

* *Beyond Good and Evil*, Section 193.

† *Ethics*, Part V, Proposition III.

he perceives something new, whenever he draws a conclusion that he had not drawn before, whenever he reasons out a different interpretation of some reality, and whenever he responds to a new artistic form.

Can awareness contract as well as expand ?

Yes—that is precisely what happens when a person is seized by a compulsive urge. When his awareness is dim, the urge can blind him to realities he would otherwise see ; it can blot out all foresight of the consequences of acting on that compulsion. His whole attention converges on the enticing or repulsive object before him and what he is driven to do about it.

However, to contract is just to contract—it adds nothing to one's understanding—whereas when awareness expands one can among other things perceive the conditions under which contraction is easy but dangerous. In this or that case his experience of the consequences will inhibit the urge to repeat such an unfortunate contraction. An often exemplified proverb is "The burned child dreads the fire". One thus gradually becomes a more reasonable person and is less the prey of sudden surges of emotion.

To draw together these varied conclusions, a person (whether primitive or civilized) always relates himself to any object or other person by experiencing it under the influence of his present mental state, endowed as that state inevitably is with its quota of emotional force and its degree of dim or clearer awareness. Emotion is the driving energy behind his acting and thinking ; expanding awareness is the dependable resource by which blunders in action and errors in thinking are slowly corrected.

The equally fundamental concept of "value", in its intimate relation to emotion and awareness, must now be clarified. The primary truth about it seems to be that anything acquires value when it becomes the object of an emotion. If the emotion is love, the object acquires the positive value of a loved person ; if it is fear, the object acquires the negative value of something to be escaped from or destroyed. Value is always involved in perception, since without it an object would attract no attention and would remain unperceived.

The most important role of value appears when we recall that through man's power of awareness he forms general concepts, which then as generic values guide his action and his thinking. Take the above mentioned concept of "food". When one is hungry he wants to eat

this or that particular edible, and through his power to perceive what is common to all edibles he forms the general concept of food. Whatever reliably satisfies hunger is food. Such a generic value expresses both emotion and clarified awareness of what is needed to satisfy it.

We will explore generic values further. When any object—say, a loaf of bread, a dollar bill, a car—is perceived as embodying such a value it acquires the characteristic features of that value, and this is a very pregnant truth. It means that the value endows the object with all the qualities and relations needed to give it those characteristics. So what a person perceives at any given time is the object as thus fashioned by his active valuation. In the preceding chapter this process was obvious ; in that setting it was called “projection”.

Let us examine in some detail this inevitable fashioning process. It works sometimes in a less, sometimes in a more, radical way. The less radical way is revealed in the fact that, whenever a person perceives anything, his perception is unavoidably selective. He sees the features that are important to his then dominant valuation, and fails to see many features that are unimportant to or conflict with that valuation. Consider a simple example, namely, a meadow as observed by a farmer, by an artist, and by a real estate dealer from the same spot. It is the same meadow, but the parts that catch the observer’s attention are not the same, and they are perceived by each of the three in a different set of relations, thus exhibiting the different values dominating their perception.

The more radical way is revealed in the fact that, if the emotion behind the valuation is intense enough, it can modify the object so as to make it accord with that value. Here the role of projection is even more obvious. A few days before income tax returns were due, I perceived a sign in front of a building a few yards away as reading : “We cut taxes” ; the sign actually read, “We cut tags”. My wish for a low tax obligation had briefly controlled my perceiving. Such mistakes occur in everyone’s experience every day, but almost always they are spontaneously corrected and are not remembered or reflected on. For instance, when glancing over a newspaper one often misperceives a headline. Sensing that something is queer he looks again, and sees that a word he had perceived was not the word actually there but was his projection. The strong influence of fear on human perception is vividly shown by the well-authenticated cases in primitive life of a person dropping dead on discovering that he had violated a taboo whose penalty was death.

Most civilized persons are socially sensitive enough to perceive objects habitually as people around them do, so any useless individual vagaries are quickly corrected. But this is not true of all persons. With some, any perception arousing a powerful emotion is felt and continues to be felt as real ; they cannot recognize that they may be merely imagining. A religious zealot may confidently affirm : "I heard God speaking to me." As a consequence, "such people are quite incapable of distinguishing what they have merely thought or heard from what they experienced as eyewitnesses."* One who realizes their incapacity can appreciate how it is possible for some persons to testify to quite fictitious occurrences as they sometimes do, and even to confess crimes of which they are innocent. The familiar forms of collective as well as individual wishful thinking are readily understandable in this setting. Such forms are illustrated by the traditional descriptions of heaven, as they appear in most religious sects. A blissful and secure resting place for those who have rarely been able to rest in this life is elaborately portrayed.

The common features and differences between primitive ways of gaining knowledge and the ways of modern science should now pose no difficulty. With both, the force of emotionally potent valuation is present and active. But the modern scientist has left behind many projections that primitive thinking was dominated by ; he has come to see reality in terms of regular laws instead of mysterious powers. Nonetheless, other projections, in harmony with that vista, take their place. The new ones are more dependable, and many of them may guide scientific investigation for a long time. But should we expect them to keep that role forever ? When continued progress shows such a perception or interpretation to be untenable and a better one has taken form, they too will be abandoned and replaced. Pause over two instructive illustrations from the history of modern science.

For a long period the "lumeniferous ether" was regarded by scientists as an indubitable reality ; it was needed—so they thought—to account for the transmission of light across empty space. But properties had to be assigned to it that were very perplexing—*e.g.*, it is a substance, but it offers no resistance to any force. Scientific thinkers vacillated about how to deal with it till Einstein's theory of relativity provided a more acceptable explanation. Then the ether was seen as a projection on nature of unjustified assumptions.** Likewise, during the

* R. H. Lowie, *Primitive Religion*, (London, George Routledge and Sons, 1925) p. 39.

** In a different sense it is still recognized—*i.e.*, as a volatile and colorless liquid.

eighteenth century almost all investigators of the process of combustion believed in the existence of "phlogiston" (a substance that is supposedly released from a burning body as it turns into ash). It too had very strange properties, such as "negative weight." After the experimental work of Lavoisier the process could be explained in terms that harmonized with explanations prevailing elsewhere, and phlogiston lost its reality ; it was seen as a projection of potent but unjustified assumptions. Then combustion could be viewed as a form of oxidation. Many other instances are familiar to historians of science. What objects or processes now generally regarded as real will in time prove to be projections of appealing but unreliable assumptions, no one can prophesy with any assurance.

A word that will be constantly used in our present quest is the word "motive." In line with its etymology and customary use we will mean by it any particular form taken, in a given situation, by an emotionally potent urge or valuation.

Experiments by psychologists are now going on—and others are in prospect—that will throw further light on the aspects of human nature involved in the above analysis. Especially important, I expect, are experimental studies of perception, of social interaction, and of motivation. We must watch for the results reached by them. But detailed corrections that may prove needed should not be confused with changes in the framework of assumptions underlying a scientific investigation. There always is such a framework, which expresses the general orientation of the scientist toward the universe at the time, and provides the major concepts as well as the methods that guide him in his observing and explaining. That framework is never either established or refuted by specific facts ; it is adopted when its value appears paramount—that is, when it seems likely to be fruitful in the way needed at the time. It is abandoned when it no longer seems so. No scientist today would try, either to demonstrate or refute the proposition that there are regularities in nature not yet discovered, or the idea that a First Cause must be postulated for an adequate explanation of any happening. He continues to assume the former and has long abandoned the latter.

3

A major corollary of the dynamic interrelations between emotion, awareness, and valuation must now be clearly faced and reflected on. Let us state it first and then examine the evidence for and against it.

All experience and thought are relative to forces in man, as he interacts with objects and other people. His perceiving and interpreting are part of that interaction and inevitably reflect his role in it. The "hard and solid facts" that we perceive around us are not as hard and solid as we think. What is out there, independent of us human beings, provides material for our perception and interpretation to work on. So while some such reality is always present, what is said about it in and after the interaction is said not by it but by the human perceiver, and expresses his state of emotion and whatever degree of awareness he has achieved. Were his part in the process eliminated, instead of revealing itself more clearly than it does now (as we are tempted to suppose) the reality would not be revealed at all.

At these assertions many a truth-seeker recoils. He feels that if they are well founded he would be lost in a hopeless skepticism. And the man in the street will smile incredulously: "Are we not in contact every hour with objects and persons who are as real as we perceive them to be? Our direct experience testifies to their reality."

But this may be a situation where almost everyone's natural belief is in part correct and in large part mistaken. So we must pause to consider how people come to hold and exemplify that belief.

Observe the process of an individual's growth from birth to adulthood, in his way of perceiving and interpreting the world. An infant may at first feel that he is in a world which by his cries and smiles he controls. They get him rather dependably what he wants. But he soon learns that there are stubborn realities to which he must adjust. However, his adjustment takes the form of adopting the world that his family lives in, and as he grows older the world of the larger society (of school, village, neighborhood) which includes his family. To him there is no available alternative. When he travels he meets people who perceive and interpret objects somewhat differently, but if he is bigoted enough he will confidently take it for granted that his society is right and all who perceive differently are wrong. In course of time this self-righteousness is gradually undermined by the necessity of living with other peoples in the same world. Increasingly, account must be taken of their ways of perceiving and interpreting objects. This readjustment is slow, largely because in the case of many familiar objects the perceptual habits of one's society have much in common with those of peoples everywhere. They even seem to have much in common with the perception of animals close to man in the evolutionary tree, or long domesticated. A dog

perceives many objects as we do. So one easily fails to see the relativity of those habits.

But other living things—insects, birds, fishes, snakes (not to mention trees and flowers)—pretty obviously perceive a quite different world. How arrogant it would be to maintain that the world such creatures live in is unreal, while the world we humans live in is real ! Also, history teaches that people's perceptual habits can change in the course of time while the external realities remain as they were. Think of the enormous change that has taken place in our perception of the celestial bodies since medieval times. How are we to understand this variety and these changes ?

There seem to be two possible explanations. One of them assumes that our own present perception of objects is dependable and that all differing views are mistaken. But is this not obviously a dogmatic and self-righteous assumption ? The other explanation is more impartial. It assumes that different views are on the same level, none having any special privilege. Primitive ways of perceiving vary greatly from tribe to tribe, and as one passes from them to civilized ways, there is convergence toward a common perception, at least of the main objects that men deal with day by day. Why this convergence ? A plausible answer is : People gradually learn so to perceive those objects that their activities with them are guided successfully. The basic activities, satisfying insistent needs, are the same in all human societies, hence people learn and adopt a common perception.

But if this account is adequate, how does the strong temptation arise to think that when one's perception is alert and cautious, a reality outside is unveiling itself to him ? A champion of relativism can reply : It is, in part, the lingering heritage among modern thinkers of the very ancient idea that knowledge is not an achievement of man but a revelation to him. Among primitive tribes and early civilized cultures this idea was widely taken for granted. At first of course it was a divinity who did the revealing, through nature and sacred scripture ; when that conviction no longer seemed tenable, it was easy to think that nature does the revealing. But this shift did not seriously upset the revelational image in the minds of thinkers. The strong feeling that an object is unveiling itself seems to be supported when one corrects a misperception by perceiving more carefully, and when one considers a camera, whose film of an object agrees in every detail with what can be seen directly. One forgets that his perception of a photograph also reflects all the forces that are actively at work in every perception.

In any case, there are signs that the natural belief is weakening and that more and more seekers for understanding are turning to the realization that our experience of the world is unavoidably shaped by varying human emotions and the values grounded in them.

Look at some instructive scientific developments. The fact that direct perception does not reveal the reality of an object is clearly shown in the demonstration by physical science that a material thing is not the stable and solid entity we perceive it to be but consists mostly of empty space, in which minute electrons or other physical units are whirling around.

Equally or more significant is the growing recognition in several branches both of physical and social science that the observer and what he is observing cannot be separated. The primary datum in any investigation is always an observation, which involves an observer as well as something observed. Each plays an essential role. The thing observed is ready to expose errors whenever the observer is open to see them ; but to detect a perception as misleading may take a long time. As for the observer, he takes for granted his instruments and current methods of investigation, also the concepts and presuppositions dominating his scientific field at the time. These change from epoch to epoch.

After a lecture on astronomy a listening lady said to the lecturer : "I follow you in what you have learned about the stars. But how did you learn their names ?" Her presupposition was thoroughly realistic : each star must have a name that, like every other characteristic, belongs to it. The astronomer presumably replied : "We not only assume the right to name the stars and planets, but also the right to describe and interpret them in the concepts now prevailing among human thinkers. There is no alternative. We know them only in the setting of our experience."

When one has become accustomed to think about everything in this orientation he will find that it clarifies some difficult questions. One question concerns the fundamental realities with which science and philosophy are occupied, such as space, time, matter, motion, causality. How, for example, can we understand space ? Before the non-Euclidean geometries appeared, with their idea that there is a fourth dimension of space, hardly anyone asked the question "Why does space have just the three dimensions we take for granted in it ?" The answer then would have been : "Those dimensions are integral to the nature of space ; that's how space is." But now an informative answer is at hand. Each of us

perceives the spatial world from a position inside his own body. Thus perceived, it has the three dimensions of up and down, right and left, in front and in back. Every point in space is exhaustively located in terms of those three dimensions. But a being who perceives his environing world quite differently than this would have a different notion of space, which might have little in common with the way we conceive it.

It is especially instructive to consider the bearing of this relativity on our knowledge of the past. The past was indubitably real, but it was real in the same way that the present is real. Our picture today of the long past that has led up to our present experience, as sketched by historical inquiries, is more trustworthy than any available alternative, but it is relative. Sometime in the future a different picture of the past will replace it. Each generation has its own description of the past. However far we reach back in history we discover no period when what we are dealing with is outside of man's experience and unaffected by it.

Shall we confidently affirm, then, that any object or event, as experienced, is relative to those who experience it? And what an unexperienced world would be like is a question that cannot be sensibly raised, let alone answered. As the Greek philosopher Protagoras declared, "Man is the measure of all things." When one thinks about life and cosmic reality what he is dealing with is human experience of life and cosmic reality. It does not become what we find it to be merely by outside forces; our expanding awareness, sensitivity, and dynamic responsiveness play a crucial part in what it becomes.

4

Life has tested man's powers to the utmost throughout his evolution and will surely continue to do so. Persons and societies are born who are better able to master the lessons needed for survival and progress, along with many who seem unable to master them. Over the centuries the latter are weeded out, while those with greater ability live on into the future and play a decisive part in shaping it. The conditions of success in mastering the vital lessons vary from age to age and situation to situation, but always a primary condition is more vigorous and resourceful awareness than their rivals can display. Today what is especially called for is greater awareness of people's emotions, and pre-eminently awareness of one's own. Gradually through man's capacity for this awareness, his emotions are transformed into more stable values and he lives in a more stable universe.

In this setting one can perceive with a good deal of assurance what gains have thus far been won and what holds man back from further progress.

Man's fundamental gain is an impressive transformation of life and thought expressing wider and more dependable awareness than his primitive forebears could attain. His fundamental handicap is that he continues to perceive and think, especially about social matters, largely under the compulsion of primitive emotions.

Look at the world as we experience it today—this kaleidoscopic and turbulent scene of which we men and women are a part ! It teems with nations large and small, religions each with many sects, ideologies clamoring for our allegiance, artistic styles ranging over a broad spectrum from tradition to startling novelty, manifold economic and educational systems—all revealing new possibilities and posing new perplexities. It is an exciting world—sometimes too exciting. But it is continuous with the world as man experienced it 8000 years ago, and the same major forces are at work now as were at work then.

I will venture a precarious prophecy. It is that those who shape the next stage in man's evolution will be the leaders of societies best preserving the alert and adventurous qualities that won success in mastering physical nature and in organizing larger social units during the early progress of civilization, while combining with them the quality now essential—a keen capacity for sensitive perception and creative action in this era of intensified intercommunication man has entered.

What will not be possible in the billion or more years that lie ahead ? Man has just as promising unfulfilled possibilities today as his ancestors had at that earlier time. He is on a long pilgrimage and has only made a beginning in the transition from his primitive state toward life in a civilized world community. The conditions vital for future progress are severe. He confronts magnified dangers, but in the midst of them magnificent possibilities can be glimpsed. The forces that support lingering superstitions are transient and undependable, while the forces that support what an open mind and heart envision are enduring and dependable.

CHAPTER III

From Unperceptive Bondage to Free Growth in Love

From Unperceptive Bondage to Free Growth in Love

So the basic process in human life is what is slowly happening in people's minds and hearts through the perennial interplay between the blind force of emotion and the light of expanding awareness. We have surveyed it at large, on the broad scale of history ; now a closer scrutiny is needed.

1

It would be pleasant to turn at once to the encouraging possibilities in this interplay. But first some obstinate facts must be faced that reveal how people continue to perceive and think in customary ways, however little awareness they reflect. We have to face the somber but very pervasive attitudes—such as anxious suspicions, naive longings, gnawing resentment, unrealistic hopes, and bitter animosity—that constantly hamper progress, today as in the past. Each attitude draws its energy from one or several potent emotional urges. Each is a form of self-centeredness in an individual or a group. Everything strongly suggests that their roots are in all persons, and can be discovered by honest self-awareness. I see them clearly in myself and in those close to me, not just in the wicked or thoughtless people who obviously should be made to behave. It is these attitudes that pose the ultimate problems humanity must solve, not the ones that may be solved by technological skill.

I propose to concentrate on six persistently obstructive attitudes, namely self-righteousness, static rigidity, pugnacity, greed, male supremacy, and sadistic cruelty. There are more, and I hope that you will add to this list from your own experience and observation.

The most serious obstruction, evident everywhere, is self-righteousness—the familiar state in which a person is vividly aware of other people's shortcomings but is blithely unaware of his own. He readily feels that the cause of all evils that harass him is never inside himself but is always outside ; if they are not due to unexpected catastrophes in physical nature, they can be blamed on the wild, malicious, or foolish acts of his fellow men. If the feeling at the heart of this attitude were put into words they would be : "Other people need to be transformed or controlled so that they will act as they ought to—but not I. I am all right as I am."

How hard it is to recognize one's own complicity in the woes of the world ! The searching challenge of the spiritual pioneers to every man or woman is "Look at the source of those woes in yourself." No stable well-being for mankind can be soberly expected till a much larger number of persons, especially among those who wield power or authority, are ready to say, "I—and my family, my profession, my religious sect, my nation—has its share of responsibility for the wrongs that oppress humanity," and show that readiness by appropriate action.

Individual self-righteousness is exhibited wherever one looks and it takes innumerable forms. Religious self-righteousness has been a terrible blight in the past and is still a major source of human suffering. The zealous religionist says, in effect, "My faith is the right faith ; whatever opposes it is wrong and should be destroyed." The inhumanity of racial self-righteousness is poignantly visible, especially where the white race has won dominant power. But the most menacing form today is national self-righteousness, using some ideological dogma to justify itself. The Western world is slowly emerging from the grip of a fierce ideological conflict. The devout Communist exclaims : "Capitalistic imperialism is the great evil ! Once it has disappeared, the world can move ahead." His impassioned opponents cry : "Communism is the great evil ! Once it has been overthrown, the world can progress." In each case, the asserter's compatriots are emotionally predisposed to agree.

A thinker finds it hard to perceive that intellectual self-righteousness is an obstructive threat. Many reveal it in their attitude toward fellow thinkers, which, if frankly expressed, would be this : My way of thinking is the way of truth ; if others would only agree with me the errors that mislead the world would soon be overcome." The so-called "intellectual" is better able than other people to deceive himself ; he can shut out what he doesn't want to see, and can assure himself that it isn't worth

seeing. Such conceit is especially sad in the reformers who vigorously criticise present social evils. Each is strongly tempted to believe that his program for dealing with them is the only sound one, so he is suspicious of other reformers who have a different blueprint for saving the world.

Two degrees of self-righteousness can be distinguished. The most menacing degree is exemplified in a fanatical ideology, aggressive sect, or crusading nation. The conviction of its champions is that they are virtuous and their policies are right ; all who oppose them are wrong. The less menacing degree is exhibited in those who in effect are saying, "I am superior and those who differ are inferior." Most Westerners have now outgrown the long prevailing idea that the peoples of Asia and Africa are boorish heathen. But that haughty conceit lingers in the notion that they are "underdeveloped" in comparison with the West. How enticing to Westerners, and how deceptive, is the implied assumption that peoples more developed in industrial technology are for that reason more developed in general !

A second seriously obstructive attitude is an inflexible orientation toward life. Change has ever been going on in all fields of thought and action, and its pace is accelerating. This is an inspiring truth to those who can welcome it and who thus become leaders in building the future. But to many it is very disturbing. It is hard for them to accept change in other than minor ways, and this resistance is easy to understand. Man feels secure if he can believe, not only that his natural environment follows a regular routine but also that the practices of his family and society are essentially fixed, with no upsetting departure from them to be expected. He is strongly convinced that a fixed credo is good and a changing mind bad.

Besides this conservative force there are others ; *e.g.*, lethargy, the comforting familiarity of old ideas, and anxious confusion when several novelties press on a person at once. Moreover, adjustment to a radically dynamic universe does pose a formidable problem : How can the stable rootedness, which is a strong emotional need of almost all people, be realized in a rapidly shifting arena ? Piety—defined by Santayana as "reverent attachment to the sources of one's being, and the steadying of one's life by that attachment"—*—is an important virtue. To realize it without such rootedness is hard.

So man has perennially found it easy to believe that what is already customary in his part of the world is all right as it stands, and

* See his *Reason In Religion* (Scribners, New York, 1922) p. 179.

that the security he longs for can somehow be found in it. This tenacious clinging to an established foundation is most vividly shown in religious conformity, with its firm conviction that any deviation from the "faith once delivered to the saints" would be disobedience to God, and in ideological orthodoxy with its fierce dogma that "revisionism" is an intolerable heresy.

But only a widened awareness of history is needed to show how irrational this rigid attachment is. Ponder the following typical expression of a static perspective. LaBruyère wrote in 1694 : "Everything has been said. One comes too late after more than seven thousand years during which there have been men and among them ones who think."* How astonishing that statement now sounds ! During the nearly three centuries since it was written, many of the pioneers of modern science have done their work, and such great philosophers as Hume, Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Marx have contributed their novel ideas. Has perceptive originality now suddenly become impossible ? Is it not more likely that the pace of progress will continue to accelerate ? The truth is that if a person actually does freeze his beliefs completely, he loses touch with the world of reality and is likely to end his days in a mental hospital.

Hence thinkers today face an arduous challenge : A dependably growing perspective is more difficult to attain but more imperative than ever. The primary virtue in a man or woman is not reverent attachment to the past but readiness for a somewhat different future.

What perils threaten a society when many of its members are firmly convinced that their habitual customs are absolutely right and their ideological dogmas are eternal truths ? Three perilous consequences appear.

First, one who thus views the swelling tumult around him readily succumbs to the belief that it is but a transitory spasm. When it proves to be more than transitory he is bewildered, and his distraught fear is expressed in a desperate effort to preserve what cannot be preserved.

The second consequence is even more perilous. The conservative fails to see that as long as current institutions are not dynamic enough

* This is the passage with which his *Les Caractères* opens. In French it reads : "tout est dit, et l'on vient trop tard, depuis plus de sept mille ans qu'il y a des hommes, et qui pensent."

to provide for peaceful change, change by violent overthrow cannot be avoided. Men in power who stubbornly refuse to yield to the nonviolent demand for greater justice will sooner or later—and today sooner rather than later—yield to the volcanic fury that will sweep them from power. There are ominous portents in the current spate of hijacking, kidnapping, assassination, and seemingly aimless murder. John Bright warned a century ago that “justice long delayed, or long continued injustice, always provokes the employment of force to obtain redress. It is in the ordering of nature and therefore of the Supreme that this is so.”* If statesmen want to avert violent revolution in an age when man’s destructive power is so terrifying, they must build a self-revising world order—an order unreservedly accepting change and providing for steady progress from wherever mankind happens to be toward the fuller life for all that beckons ahead.

There is a third perilous consequence. Look at the widening gap between the elder and the younger generation today. A self-righteous elder easily fails to put himself in the place of his youthful successors who will insist on change as soon as change proves desirable and feasible. The contrasting attitude is vividly exemplified by the sages who because of their trust in the next generation wrote no books. An Indian saint when asked to write a book replied, “I am training disciples. They and their students will be living volumes, proof against the natural disintegration of time and the unnatural interpretations of critics.”**

Reflect next on the attitude that makes war and other forms of organized violence possible. I find no better way of describing it than by the word “pugnacity”. It is grounded in man’s visceral response to a menacing situation, and is shown in the militant determination of any “in-group” to preserve its life and enlarge its resources against any “out-group” it may face.

Man is descended from animals who were aggressive predators and whose unremitting concern was to protect the local group to which they belonged. They fought off any threat to the territory that supplied their food and other necessities. When the human species arose, this struggle for survival continued. Each local clan or tribe constituted the in-group and other tribes the out-group against whose depredations its members had to be ever on guard.

* See Langston Hughes, *An African Treasury*, (New York, Crown Publishers, Inc., 1960) p. 33.

** Paramhansa Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi* (New York, Philosophical Library, Inc., 1951), p. 65.

What has happened during the few thousand years that have elapsed in man's progress from tribalism toward civilization ? Three vital changes affecting armed conflict stand out.

One is the formation of larger social units ; empires and nations with millions of citizens and vast stretches of territory have throughout most of the globe taken the place of locally segregated tribes. The second is that, since the surface of our planet is finite, the continuing growth of these large units brings them increasingly into clash with each other. There is not enough room for all aggressive competitors, so any productive area is soon coveted by more than one nation or ruling group. The third vital change is revealed in the evolution of weapons. From a stage in which clubs, slings, and crude spears had to be depended on, men have invented more and more efficient weapons ; this progress has culminated in the nuclear missiles whose destructive power is almost unlimited.

In this threatening predicament, the prevalent attitudes of men and women in relation to their in-group and to possibly hostile out-groups remain essentially the same as they were throughout the long past. Hence war is still accepted by most people as a legitimate way of settling disputes. When they look at a detested foreign government they easily see, not human beings moved by the same forces that move themselves, but a vicious enemy who may destroy them if he is not intimidated. In any crisis the passionate urge everywhere felt is : "The resources of my group—whether clan, tribe, or nation—must be defended against all threats." And both the concept of "resources" and that of "defense" conveniently become very flexible. A nation's resources can be felt to include the power to impose its will on other peoples, turning them into slaves, colonial subjects, or a supply of cheap labor. This expansion is supported by the eagerness of a pugnacious creature to prove his superior might against any rivals. When that eagerness overrides all contrary emotions, a Cenghis Khan can say : "The greatest joy is to conquer one's enemies, to pursue them, to seize their property, to see their families in tears, to ride their horses, and to possess their daughters and wives."* As for defense, it is easily interpreted to cover zealous extensions of a nation's sway. In fact, peoples achieving unusual military superiority sooner or later try to push their control, often at immense cost in men and money, beyond the limits of the area they can control. A recent illustration is America's tragic venture in Southeast Asia.

* See C. P. Fitzgerald, *China, A Short Cultural History* (New York, Appleton Century, 1939), p. 428.

As long as these motives are so potent and so readily aroused, a small war can easily become a big one and a big war can now become a nuclear holocaust. All that is required is an escalation of belligerence among the military, the political leaders, or the populace to a point where awareness of the calamitous consequences fades away and men are driven by a blind demand that, come what may, the "pernicious" enemy must be beaten.

In the past, pugnacity has brought positive compensations. Highly valuable scientific discoveries have been made in order to serve military purposes; the mastery of atomic energy is the outstanding recent example. Another compensation is that the courage, alertness, energy, and responsible loyalty associated with military success are important human values, which should not be lost. Nonetheless, the world in which civilized man now lives has been transformed to the point where his pugnacity is an onerous obstruction, and it is so in many areas of life besides the military. In the one-room country schools of fifty years ago the essential requirement for a new teacher was that he (or she) could lick the biggest boy in the class; only when that important matter had been settled could the educational work begin. In the give and take of social discussion one often meets persons ready to turn an unimportant disagreement into a battleground. Any "boss" may so dislike a promising younger associate that he refuses to recommend the latter's promotion. Others try to change his mind, to no avail. As long as he remains in authority nothing can be done. Among almost all groups such displays of animosity occasionally appear.

A fourth persistently obstructive attitude is greed—that is, a swelling zest to enlarge one's possessions and power or those of one's primary group, with the envy that usually accompanies it. In much primitive life such zest seems to be rare; stable means of survival for oneself and one's family are sufficient to satisfy a person. But under conditions of advancing civilization this achievement is often not enough. Many individuals and groups persistently want more showy clothes, more expensive cars, the newest refrigerator, when what they have could be sufficient. Advertisers exploit this want to the full.

Greed for material possessions is not the only form of greed. One may be greedy for recognition, for being loved, for praise and honor, for sexual appeal. Also, like other powerful motives, greed can be easily rationalized. A familiar rationalization in the Western world is this: "For a few years I must make my pile—then I will be able to do what I want to do." Those around him notice that the pile never seems quite big enough.

To describe the greed exhibited by a nation the word "imperialism" is now widely used. Since no people admits to being imperialistic there are numerous pleas by which it tries to justify its greedy aggression ; it is "bearing the white man's burden," or saving a weak country from invasion by others, or protecting a scarce resource against threats from within or without. If it is able to, it will set up in the object of its aggression a government subservient to its ambitions, proclaiming that the rule of such a government serves the best interest of those governed.

A fifth obstruction is the attitude expressed in the maintenance of male supremacy over women. This attitude has prevailed in practically all societies we are acquainted with except some uninfluential ones, and it still strongly resists the full emancipation of women to an equal status with men. It assumes that the male is the rightful authority and natural ruler ; the proper role of the female is to provide for his comfort and serve his pleasure. It is revealed in many ways ; one is the unwillingness of most men to do what they disdainfully describe as "woman's work."

Ponder in the setting of this hoary presupposition the outstanding failure of the great civilized religions. Otherwise so compassionately perceptive, they one and all accepted and were ready to perpetuate this radical injustice. Each of them brought about some improved status for women in the region where it arose, but each took for granted male supremacy. God has been uniformly pictured as masculine. To be sure, an honored place for the maternal role was necessary, hence a semi-divine mother had to be revered in some form. Nevertheless, the tacit or explicit presupposition that women should be subordinate to men was preserved. Jesus may well have viewed woman as man's equal, but St. Paul sternly insisted on putting her in her lowly place.*

Today people are slowly feeling their way toward a humane understanding of the role of the sexes in relation to the realities and aspirations of civilized life. In the Western world women are gradually achieving political equality, and it will in time be achieved elsewhere. More and more married women are pursuing careers or finding employment outside the home ; this usually gives them financial independence which most of them had not enjoyed before. As yet, however, only rarely has full equality between men and women been realized. Many women prefer the advantages of a submissive state. But progress away from it is a primary challenge, for this reason among

* See such passages as I Corinthians 11, Ephesians 5, and I Timothy 2.

others : only when real equality has been established can the distinctive potentialities of each sex be clearly perceived and freely realized.

The difficulties in the way are enormous. The forces working toward equality between men and women sharply challenge the institution of marriage and the family in its traditional forms. If husband and wife are to live together as equal partners and to exercise equal responsibility for their children, a radical transformation of established assumptions and habits must come. That transformation is under way, but the process is made more difficult by the quandaries arising from rapidly growing sexual freedom and the availability of new modes of contraception. People can express their sexual urges in ways that traditional conventions prohibited ; and in many circles can do so without being condemned. In this setting the forces supporting male supremacy are still powerful, and will not easily be overcome.

A sixth obstructive attitude is sadistic cruelty. This pleasure in making another person or creature suffer seems to be rarely shown in our animal cousins. In human society it is ordinarily repressed, because it is the exact opposite of the Golden Rule ; one does to another what he would most hate to have done to himself. But its roots are present in almost every man or woman, and can be discovered if one looks candidly at the savage fantasies that now and then pop into his imagination. The horror that sadistic cruelty can awaken in a sensitive soul is lightened by such an honest look and also by perceiving that men and women who saw no other way to protest a terrible social evil have wreaked on themselves the hideous cruelties that sadists have wreaked on others.

How do sadistic fantasies arise ? Usually, if not always, in a person who feels that he has been unfairly treated, and is driven to take vengeance on whoever or whatever happens to be in his power. A child who has been punished and feels the punishment as unjust will strike his little sister or stamp on a worm in his path. An embittered adult can go berserk and shoot down innocent persons who happen to be within range of his gun. The most prominent recent display of sadism on a large scale was manifested in the Nazi concentration camps and execution chambers. On a less shocking scale it is exemplified all too often by parents, teachers, and policemen. Religious persons should look unflinchingly at the sadistic trait attributed to God in traditional theology. He is always proclaimed to be merciful and forgiving, but the doctrine of eternal punishment in the fire of hell for refractory sinners could hardly have been conceived were God not pictured as capable of utter cruelty.

The less horrendous forms that sadism can take are many. A very frequent form is humiliation, practiced by a person with authority or power over someone who is in no position to rebel. Every school usually has at least one teacher who may humiliate a disliked pupil, and an employee is likely on occasion to be humiliated by a surly employer or bureaucrat.

2

None of these six obstructive attitudes, however strong it may seem to be, is inflexibly fixed in human nature. The spiritual pioneers and their sensitive followers have shown that it is possible to pass from their sway toward the attitudes essential to stable and sociable life in a free community. Looking at them and their slowly spreading influence, may we assume that in understanding man his potentiality is far more important than any present actuality—what he is coming to be than what he now is? The most certain truth in a world of change is that what today can be verified about him will not in all respects be observable in the future. Moreover, progress in overcoming some of these obstructions is already discernible if one looks for it. The more blatant forms of self-righteousness are rarer than they used to be; notice that today political leaders may feel it necessary to proclaim that their policies serve the welfare of all people, not just their own countrymen. The right to dissent from traditional beliefs in politics, economics, and education is widely admitted, and although relapses are frequent it is somewhat better protected than it was when the static orientation was more dominant. Women are steadily moving toward equality with men. Will these advances continue? Whither are they leading?

The forces to which we now turn are forms taken by expanding awareness as it guides the realization of man's creative possibilities. The forces leading toward destruction are visible everywhere; are these constructive forces visible also? They doubtless take different forms from age to age, people to people, and person to person. But if they are real, some encouraging general lessons ought to be increasingly exemplified. And the preceding chapters have revealed significant progress in the long run course of history toward meeting basic human needs. Since those needs change in the course of time and response to a later one builds on the success in meeting earlier needs, the process is not just change but growth.

Let us think now of the individual person, for every society is composed of individual persons. Can we realistically view him as always growing ?

All thinkers are familiar with physical and intellectual growth. The former comes to an end when adulthood is reached ; the latter can continue through life, in the case of all who do not lose the zest to enlarge their knowledge and insight. Many thinkers, however, see no process of growth that transcends and encompasses the intellectual. Is there such a process ? The spiritual pioneers have been sure that there is, and that all men and women have infinite possibilities that can be realized through it. They discern that without such realization every person is only partially himself—but that through his participation in that inclusive growth, feebly or strongly, he is on the way toward fuller selfhood. Are they right ?

A searching inquiry here may well begin by asking : What is it that men and women everywhere are striving for ? The answer constantly and confidently given is "happiness", which almost all people picture as the satisfaction of their present desires. This answer seems very plausible. But is happiness really won in that way ? Two considerations must be weighed, for this picture may be deceptive.

If people want happiness, one would naturally expect to find them striving earnestly to learn how to win it. Their present ignorance is obvious. But instead he finds that most of them confidently and zealously pursue success, as people around them conceive it, without asking whether it will bring happiness. Were they to learn more truth about themselves would they not discover this : No person's desires today are quite the same as his desires ten years ago, and the difference reveals the slowly molding effect, during that decade, of a more inclusive process than satisfying his desires and pursuing success that he has been going through ?

Now is that process growth, or might it be just change ? It is the former if through it he has moved toward the self he aspires to be. And when he experiences something of that progress, he can view the succession of his desires in a larger setting, that of his evolving life as a whole. In this setting he sees that when happiness is sought by satisfying one's present desires it can often be experienced briefly, but not enduring well-being. The main reason is that those desires often clash with realities that must be recognized if he is to survive and progress. The truth he must sooner or later learn is that enduring well-being is won

only through the transformation of his desires into trustworthy values, guided by increasing awareness of the realities that affect his quest to satisfy them. A person thus growing does not submissively obey whatever transient urge or unreliable value goads him. He can perceive how it affects other things in his experience ; instead of surrendering to it he can realize that it may need to be modified or replaced. "I feel like taking a day off." One can succumb to that emotionally appealing desire, but most adults will add at once, "If I do that I might lose my job." One who sees that such a consequence is likely will guide his action by a larger value than the pleasure of a brief holiday. But how often the unhappy consequence is not clearly foreseen ! Here again a long run perspective on life is needed. With it, one foresees better the consequences of any act, and perceives more plainly the process of inclusive growth.

It could be that every adult is growing beyond submissive obedience to his transitory desires and toward control by his more enduring valuations, even though the growth may be slow and regressions frequent. The strong compulsion to satisfy urgent desires gradually weakens, as he comes to see that they are sources of bondage ; and he increasingly responds to the wise valuations, for he senses that they are trustworthy guides toward the fulfillment he seeks. The process is often painful, but he is encouraged by every step of achievement. Through continued growth he becomes a consciously active instrument for expressing stable and lasting values.

The further question vital to self-understanding then is not "Where, under the urge of my current desires, am I going ?" But "Where do I want to go ? In what direction will I find true fulfillment ?" And the main practical problem is no longer : How can I gratify the desires of my present self ? But rather, What kind of self do I want to be, and how can I advance more rapidly toward it ? When one responds to Shakespeare's maxim "To thine own self be true", this is the self he will naturally have in mind—not the self he now is but the self into which he is advancing. Viewed in this perspective, man is clearly more than a creature goaded to action by his transitory desires. He can aspire—aspire toward a state in which his full potential as a person would be realized. This aspiration is at first weak, but it can grow stronger.

However, a serious difficulty arises. "Aspiration" and "fulfillment" are vague words, and people hold different assumptions about what values are trustworthy. Indeed, the same person's assumptions change from time to time. He may have unthinkingly assumed that success is a trustworthy

value and then failed to find fulfillment in it. If his mind is alert, this will lead him to revise his assumption about what is a trustworthy value. So the growth we now have in mind is a process in which desires change and also the meaning of the words we naturally use changes. One trenchant consequence is that a person is unable early in the process to foresee how he will interpret later. They will lose something of their former meaning and will gain a new meaning. At each stage of his growth he has an aspiring glimpse of the person he wants to become, but that glimpse takes a different form and is differently expressed when he enters a new stage.

These difficulties come to a puzzling head when in thinking and talking we use the almost indispensable word "self". It is natural to assume that this word refers to a definite and unambiguous entity, but that may be a mistake. There is of course continuity between what one is as a baby and what he is at any later period of life. This makes it easy to think that the self can be definitely identified and described. But grave and stubborn problems arise when any description is offered. There is something about the self which leads some thinkers to hold that each of us has many selves. Others deal with it by maintaining that there is only one self but that it has many aspects, which are not merely different but may conflict. From a moral point of view—which becomes vital when growth is emphasized—some of a person's desires and aspirations may be self-centered, while others may be centered on some value outside the narrow ego. The immature and the mature self diverge, but each of us can be both at once.

In these perplexities, I confidently affirm that growth is real and universal—that anyone can pass from a conflicting, vacillating ego toward a more unified and steadfast self. At each stage in the process he outgrows desires, beliefs, and ideals that have become unacceptable, and their abandonment makes room for more dependable aspirations with the insights that accompany them. He can from time to time experience the joy of realizing that some of the boisterous and warring parts of himself have become whole under the guidance of his persistent aspirations. He lives more auspiciously in the world as it is, and envisions more hopefully the world as it might become. When one experiences this process he will say with Hammarskjöld: "Out of myself as stumbling block; into myself as fulfillment."^{*} But this new self he is growing into cannot in advance take definite form in his mind. Only slowly does he pass from the stage in which he has merely fleeting glimpses of progress to the

^{*} *Markings*, op. cit., p. 152.

stage when a vision of the path to his integrated self in an integrated universe can steadily guide him.

Here is a frustrating quandary. How might such a dynamic and fully open-ended process be made intelligible? It is easy to understand why a person who has grown to physical and mental adulthood and is well adjusted to life in his society is strongly tempted to raise no puzzling questions about that process. He cannot avoid living in it, but he can avoid thinking about it.

3

Men and women who are active and alert seem to choose between two guiding maxims in the face of this challenge. One maxim is to seek greater power over things and people—power primarily for oneself, although it is often diluted with power for one's family, one's vocational group, one's sect, or one's nation. Such persons want to be feared rather than loved. That route almost irresistibly appeals to those who feel that they have what it takes to succeed in this ambitious quest. Many of them do win enough success so that they are encouraged to keep on following this maxim.

But when that way of life is viewed in long run perspective, how does it fare? Never is its goal fully won, for by its very nature it arouses resentment. Most people do not like to be controlled, and resist, subtly if not openly, any attempt to control them. Hence one who wants to be feared rather than loved is fearful himself; he senses that at any time his meagre control may be lost and his transient success disappear.

The contrary maxim is to grow in love—love of things as they become instruments of his mature self, and especially love of persons in their inexhaustible possibilities. We must explore the nature of love as it steadily evolves and deepens.

The word "love" has acquired various meanings in the course of man's quest for moral progress and moral understanding. Many people now mean by it the most positive and fulfilling emotion they have experienced in their human relations. Prominent among the feelings that appear in that experience are the affection of a parent for his child, the romantic attachment between man and woman, the mutual fondness of two friends. No doubt these feelings were in the mind of the sage who

wrote : "Do not be cynical about love, for in the midst of all aridity and disenchantment it arises as perennial as the grass."* Such feelings can arise spontaneously and are the natural source of whatever ability a person achieves to grow beyond self-centeredness. Indeed, in the absence of any such feeling, the word "love" seems inappropriate. Every expression of it has virtues as well as limitations ; romantic love for instance defies tribal rules and ancestral feuds that obstruct human progress.

However, do these emotions exhibit the true nature of love ? They may, but often they do not. The acts that express them may clash with the well-being of the persons loved instead of serving it. In that case is love really present ? Often the emotion called "love" is mainly a longing to be loved by others. Also there may lurk in those emotions a subtle attitude of possessiveness—of wishing to control the loved person—and also of competitiveness : "Because I love you I want you to love me instead of others—indeed, I want you to back me against all those whom I hate." Is such an emotion really love ? It can blind one's view and distort one's perception. Others words and phrases are at hand to describe these feelings, *e.g.*, "desire to control," or "wish to possess." In this quandary the seeker for understanding is tempted to use instead of "love" words that do not so readily suggest any unsavory motive—words like "respect," "caring," and "cherishing."

What is the wise choice in this dilemma ? I choose "love," trusting that the other words will help reveal its true meaning and will gradually correct the popular idea of love as amorous passion or soft-hearted sentiment.

Why this choice ? Besides the crucial fact that without perceptive awareness any virtue can lead to bad consequences, I see two potent reasons : In the evolution of civilized religion love became more and more emphasized as the supreme virtue in both God and man, and the psychotherapeutic view of man seems to converge on the conclusion that love is the core of a mature personality. And there are other reasons. Notice the strong tendency in any social group to weaken or split apart under the impact of personal clashes with their emotional tensions. But any such group is likely to hold together if its members seriously practice the commandment : "Love one another." Wherever love really becomes the supreme emotion, greater than any motive that might oppose it, the inevitable conflicts that arise in any human interaction are on the way to

* From "Desiderata," dated 1692 and found in St. Paul's Church in Baltimore.

becoming reconciled in a spirit of unity. So let us beware of surrendering "love" to any incongruous interpretation ; let us rather clarify as best we can its valid meaning.

Look at the men and women who most fully exemplify love. They may not talk much about love, but they show a steadfast concern for the enduring welfare of those loved—a concern that their needs be dependably met and their aspirations fulfilled. Augustine once said, "Love, and do what you will." Surely that is a true insight only if this kind of love is meant ; otherwise it is dangerous. A fond parent may by overindulgence fail to prepare his child for the realities of life, and an earnest religious person may feel that he loves others when exhorting them to sell their property and wait on a hilltop for the Second Coming. Only through a persistent readiness to become aware of one's blunders will such a feeling be changed so as to guide action better. Hence the more trustworthy insight is : "Love, and learn to love better." Directed by that insight, one can grow beyond any deficiency or self-deception in what he regards as love.

Two dimensions in the meaning of "love" are thus revealed ; if either is absent the word would be misused. There is always emotion reaching out to embrace another person or persons, which one has in mind when he employs such a phrase as "caring for." There is also expanding awareness of those persons and the realities amid which they live, for only as awareness is expanding can the love be more than blind attachment or unstable sympathy. Without compassionate feeling there would be no tenderness in love ; without widening awareness there would be no sensitive understanding.

In both dimensions love leaves behind a narrow ego-centered demandingness on one's fellows, but through the second its outreach is unlimited. As expanding awareness, it seeks fulfilling interaction with every reality, and its special concern for persons arises from perceiving that in their increased well-being the richest fulfillment can be realized.

Through his social interaction a truly loving person makes the joys of life more joyful and the griefs less grievous. He can identify himself with all human interests—present and future, local and distant, strong and weak, so far as they do not destroy each other—and hopefully seek their fuller realization. Knowing that the universe has plenty of time, he can be patient with the slow pace of progress. His sense of deepened unity with his fellows assures him that as he progresses at whatever pace proves possible toward his greater self, the whole of mankind is progressing toward its greater humanity.

In brief, love is the emotional energy in man or woman which, when it is guided and permeated by growing awareness, is ever envisioning a more inclusive good and transforming life bit by bit into accord with that vision. It gradually discovers the appropriate place for any particular value in the totality of human aspirations. Through it man's responsive and productive powers flow at full tide

As yet, persons exemplifying this description are rare, and to their fellows they often seem queer aberrations. Indeed, there are those who seriously recommend succumbing to the potent urges always ready to drive one into action. Their maxim is : "Follow your feeling." This is to blind oneself to the inevitable consequences of acting on such a maxim, which sooner or later prove unbearable. When they come, one wishes with all his might that he had foreseen and avoided them.

4

Now besides the dimensions of emotion and expanding awareness, another distinction that is equally or more important bids for clear recognition. It is a distinction between two directions in which the awareness essential to genuine love can expand.

One direction, taken for granted throughout the above, is expansion from a parochial attachment to family, friends, and close associates to a concern for all men and women wherever they may be. This is an essential form of expansion because "it is the very nature of love to want to include others in it."* In this concern one opens himself to the experience and thought of other cultures, other styles of life, other ways of thinking and feeling. His love is growing in breadth.

To expand in the second direction is to grow in the strength with which self-centeredness is overcome and oneness in feeling with others is realized. Such love is growing in depth. It is a different direction because a person may love all his fellows with a rather weak and tepid kindliness in which selfish or provincial concerns still linger. Indeed, many "good" persons are content with a very hesitant reaching out beyond their close associates, and obviously assume this to be all that is morally expected of them. The spiritual pioneers show that much

* Ells Boulding, *Born Remembering*, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 200, Wallingford, Pa., p. 22.

more than this can be felt and expressed. How is that "more" revealed, and what basic lessons about man does it teach ?

Reflect on its absence in the humane person who is unable to bring more than half-hearted help to his fellows in need because he so frequently needs help himself. Yearning to be comforted, he cannot comfort others ; feeling lonely, he cannot be sociable with others who are lonely ; grieving in sudden bereavement, he cannot heal the grief of others ; immersed in torpid boredom, he cannot bring cheer to others who feel no zest in life. He sincerely wants existence to be worthwhile for his fellows, but until it has become joyfully worthwhile for him his wish that they be happily fulfilled is weak and vacillating.

Yet no person is condemned to remain in this weakness forever. One's unstable good-will can grow into a strong and fearless fellow feeling, in which love can deeply penetrate ; the fearful ego can fade away. One may realize a sensitive and responsive outflow that gives clear meaning to this second direction of growth, revealing infinite possibilities.

How does one become such an open and outflowing person ? We see constantly that emotion can be narrow and intense, also that it can be broad and pallid ; how can it grow in both breadth and intensity ?

The basic principle would seem to be this : One's power to love cannot be left for long without any object, and only a greater can replace a lesser love. A simple principle—but to be really guided by it is difficult indeed ! One must stop focusing most of his love on his present limited self and free it to reach out toward an unlimited and greater object. An intense but less dependable love can be slowly replaced by a more dependable love. To turn inward is thus needed in order to turn more assuredly outward and forward. One thus expands in the second direction. What is such a person like ?

Some characteristics are easy to list. He takes it for granted that he will be a trustworthy member of the societies in which he lives and works—family, neighborhood, professional association—and will lead them toward a vaster and richer fulfillment. He perceives in each of his fellows and in every situation hopeful as well as somber possibilities ; his commitment is always to foster the former and avert the latter. He will engage in the most constructive action he sees as possible in the immediate scene while never losing hope for the longer future.

An especially impressive token of this overflowing is readiness to face any evil however menacing and to meet it with strength whatever may happen to himself. Such readiness naturally arises when one is free from inner conflict with its benumbing effects. With him, nothing can happen in the world outside that does not provide opportunity for a creative response. The extreme form of this readiness is shown in the "pacifism" (a word easily misunderstood) characteristic of spiritual and moral leaders. They see clearly that in the long run "nothing is gained by brute force ; people must be drawn to good by goodness."* Violence they are sure can be dependably overcome only by non-violence, and their love is strong enough to include even those who act like enemies. They can take an apparently hostile act as a spiritual challenge, just as a daring mountaineer takes the menace of an overhanging cliff he is about to climb as a physical challenge. So far as their own feeling is concerned, the only enemy they have is the lingering childishness inside themselves. They exemplify a constant warmheartedness to everyone and everything that enters their experience, unhampered by fear of ridicule or hostile attack. They have learned that "love casts out all fear." Hence when protecting or aiding a victim of injustice, as they will often be doing, they are concerned for the perpetrators of injustice as they are for him.

They see possibilities of good even in the exploitive or enraged person, not merely in those whom he is abusing or assailing. And rather than destroy him they will run the risk of injury or death to themselves. They are willing to die but not to kill. Even when war is imminent they see the "enemy" not as devilish fighters for an opposing and unjustified cause but as persons like themselves. The challenge is not to kill them but to achieve reconciliation with them in a peaceful world community.

That such moral strength is possible seems to many quite incredible, even in the presence of a person who reveals it. They naturally react to his words and acts in terms of the feelings they would now have if they were to speak those words or perform those acts. To such people both a supernatural and a "pacifist" concern look grotesquely strange and naive. In their case these concerns could be felt only by strenuously pushing out of their field of vision the repulsive vices and appalling evils that haunt the world. But perhaps such people feel this way because they have not yet experienced, except in

* *Doctor Zhivago*, op. cit., p. 261.

hints and foretastes, the joy of loving—loving that is not exclusive like jealous romantic passion, and not possessive. A truly inclusive, ever outflowing love is foreign to them, almost unreal.

Human life does not need to be cramped in this way. People are continually changing, and sometimes the change is radical and beneficent. While the world around a person remains as it now is—which may be pretty grim or ugly—his emotional response to it can happily and permanently change—a vast enlargement of his sensitivity can take place, bringing an exuberant and hopeful vitality previously unattainable. Many people think that only a callous person could be joyful in a world of widespread suffering. That thought is quite understandable but quite mistaken. An army doctor in a hospital filled with wounded soldiers can be glad for his ability to relieve their pain and aid their recovery. Such a doctor would not exchange his role for any other, despite the pains and death he constantly witnesses. A humane psychotherapist responding to a patient in despair can be supported and cheered by knowing that his wise understanding may draw the patient away from the brink of suicide and help him start on the path to life and hope. Both of these healers know the joy of playing their part in the perennial venture of overcoming evil with good.

How fortunate it is if a person learns these truths before the weakness and querulousness of old age creep in! The tragedy of many men and women is that they pass from middle age toward decrepitude without having moved out beyond their imprisoning self-centeredness. It is not inevitable that as one grows senile in body, and even somewhat in mind, he must shrink in upon the puerile heritage in himself, becoming a prey to disappointment, despondency, and despair. If he has already given himself to God and to his fellows, he can continue to expand his compassionate awareness beyond any apparent limit, and can meet with cheerful acceptance whatever has to happen. He finds life good—not life in heaven but life right here on earth.

The outcome of this renewal is that the ground one is walking on becomes holy ground, the goals he strives for become an inspiring vista, the persons around him become comrades, the social milieu becomes a theater in which a great destiny is being realized. Everything in his universe looks different and more hopeful. He knows that the whole self he is growing into is the whole self of other men and women too, for one who loves realizes that "Your neighbor is your larger self,"* and

* Swami Sivananda *All About Hinduism*, Rishikesh, 1947, p. 170.

gives his present self to that larger self. So he is not benumbed or defeated by even the most gruesome evils. He accepts their challenge and does what he can to eliminate their causes and free human life from them. If one is spiritually strong enough he can realize joy in life even when harassed by grief, pain, flagrant injustice, or loss of physical and mental vitality.

Such a reborn self may appear less strange when viewed with the help of two familiar clues. Almost everyone has engaged in a task which was a boring chore when performed in a certain mood but became a happy release of energy when performed in a different mood. Romantic love can bring such a change. A young man is doing his duties routinely in some professional post ; when he finds his mate and sees those duties as his preparation for marriage and a family they are suffused with a new, uplifting exuberance.

Still more illuminating is the practically universal esthetic experience. The beauty of a work of art or the grandeur of a scene in nature lures one out of his narrow present self into satisfying harmony with a portion of the surrounding world. It captivates him—as we naturally say, he is “absorbed” in it. The word can be taken as a metaphor, but it is more than a metaphor. He is united in feeling with the absorbing object or scene ; in that unforgettable experience he and it are no longer two separate entities but have become one. His natural wish to expand in blissful union with reality beyond his present self is satisfied. This absorption teaches in easily appreciable form the supreme truth that an inspiring and sustaining realization can be won without any change in the outside world ; what is needed is change in one’s own self and its power to respond to that world.

Sadly, most persons are so constantly in the practical and cognitive attitudes toward things and people that the esthetic attitude hardly seems quite real ! The former attitudes stress one’s separation from the object ; only the latter attitude realizes their union. Indian thinkers can teach Westerners a profound lesson, with their perception that the esthetic, the cognitive, and the mystical intrinsically belong together.

Now a person whose love has expanded freely in the second direction is absorbed in this way with the entire universe. He can perceive its all-encompassing wholeness as a great artist perceives a less inclusive scene—*i.e.*, in an inspired awareness that no matter how ugly any part may be the whole need not be experienced as ugly. The ugliness is not banished, but it is transmuted in a life-enhancing response

to the whole. One who has realized something of this response understands the message in "Desiderata" that "with all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams it is still a beautiful world."* That is, one can become inwardly transformed so that without blinding himself to evil he perceives the positive possibilities in everyone and everything he meets, and thus can see beauty through the broken dreams. Response to natural beauty is transitory, but response to the greatness of the infinite whole can become an enduring and sustaining presence in one's continued growth.

This thoroughgoing transmutation has not been missed by men of literature.

"However ugly the parts appear, the
whole remains beautiful. A severed hand is
as ugly thing, and man dissevered from the earth and
stars and his history—for contemplation or in fact—
Often appears atrociously ugly. Integrity is wholeness,
the divine beauty is
Organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things,
the divine beauty of the universe. Love that, not man
Apart from that, or else you will share man's pitiful
confusions, or drown in despair when his days darken."**

Both the great artist and the prophetic mystic know that while it violates one's integrity to evade evil reality, the challenge it brings can be serenely met, provided that oneself has become capable of meeting it—has been reborn into a deeper selfhood. Many of our fellow human being seem to be quite unlovable, but the spiritual pioneers show that when that rebirth has come the new self can see in all persons inexhaustible possibilities. They do not need to be different for this response to appear; the seeker for understanding needs to become different.

There are intermediate situations which illumine this transformed experience. They are wider in scope than appreciative absorption in a scene of natural beauty and not so wide as the mystic's union with the whole of reality.

Think of a devoted wife and mother in a cultural milieu where what is expected of her is just what she herself is ready to give. Her life is

* See above, p.

** See Robinson Jeffers' *Selected Poetry*, Random House, New York. 1938, p. 594.

nct easy ; she has her share of toil, grief, and pain. There are illnesses and an occasional accident ; other unexpected vicissitudes arise from time to time. But she takes them all as they come ; her inner resource is sufficient to make them opportunities for expressing her strength and understanding. Such a woman finds family life a joyful experience ; her deeper self realizes constant fulfillment in it. Or think of a Secretary General of the United Nations, such as Dag Hammarskjöld or U Thant. The responsibility he faced was colossal, the frustrations met were exasperating, failure of the member nations to give strength to the organization was terribly discouraging. But he was in a position with unique opportunity to serve the well-being of all mankind, for the future as well as in the present. He sensed the magnitude of that opportunity, and gladly gave himself to it. The life each of those two statesmen lived was full of trials and tribulations as well as encouraging achievements. Being the kind of person he was, however, the joy of his creative experience outweighed the contrary emotions. He needed no reward from the outside ; life itself was continually a blessing.

In each of these situations what stands out is an experience of supporting and uplifting fulfillment by one's growing self in a large area of the reality in which that self lives. The distinctive feature of the mystic union with God is that all limits are transcended ; no reality, alluring or ugly, remains outside.

A serene faith is then possible that in a world teeming with much evil as well as good, love will spontaneously arise in its diverse forms, and that through expanding awareness the lesser loves will gradually grow into a greater love which will be expressed toward all one's fellows and in all areas of life. As thus expanding, love becomes sensitive and responsive union with the whole of creation. This process takes time, and in any given situation love may seem completely to fail. Nonetheless, truly to love is what makes life worth living, and growth in love makes it ever more worth living.

The aspiration for such an all-encompassing openheartedness has been unforgettably voiced by the Buddha :

"May creatures all around
In weal and peace ; may all
be blessed with peace always ;
all creatures weak or strong,
all creatures great and small ;

"Creatures unseen or seen,
dwelling afar or near,
born or awaiting birth—
may all be blessed with peace.

"Let all-embracing thoughts
for all that lives be thine,
an all-embracing love
for the universe
in all its heights and depths,
unmarred by hate within."*

The inspired portrayal of love in I Corinthians 13 (especially verses 4 to 7) shows that St. Paul also was sure that true love is expanding in awareness as well as in compassionate feeling and that it can be victorious over our self-centeredness.

5

What future goal will a true lover of his fellows aim to achieve ?

Nonreligious seers have answered this question by portraying some alluring utopia ; religious thinkers by such a phrase as "the Kingdom of God on Earth." Those goals have energized many earnest men and women in the past. Yet, as they were usually conceived, are they not ill-advised and unrealistic ? To picture a life free from every kind of pain or sorrow and enjoying unending bliss is very appealing. It galvanizes one's energy. But can such a utopia really be expected ? When we watch the way progress is achieved through the ages it seems that when the present harassing problems are solved other equally harassing ones will appear. Our successors will be as challenged by them as we are by the ones we confront. We may hope for a future less haunted by cruelty, grief, and despair, but if we are to avoid self-deception the wise goal is surely not maximum happiness, nor freedom from woe and tribulation, but increased power to make both happiness and tribulation a means of continued growth. Hence what is being slowly achieved is not heaven on earth but a greater humanity—greater in understanding, greater in moral insight, greater in artistic genius, greater in power to win harmony with nature, greater in responsiveness to the Divine Whole and in ability to gain more inspiring visions of that Whole—in short, greater in capacity to conquer whatever evils threaten at any time and to attain whatever

* From the *Sutta Nipata*, Vagga 1, Sutta 8 (as translated in the Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 37, pp. 37-39).

goods become possible. The poets, artists, and dramatists as well as the thinkers of the future will help their fellows perceive the manifold ways in which that greatness can be realized. They will glimpse and communicate the glory, beauty, and wonder of the infinite dynamic universe that can be glimpsed when one's inner eye is fully open. Every person born on our planet has an opportunity to share in this vision and to play his part in realizing that greater humanity. His part may seem very tiny but it is always more than nothing.

To rein in our tempting fantasies in this realistic fashion does not mean that we must refuse to cherish any inspiring picture of what the greater humanity will be like. So long as we do not deceive ourselves about how severe the inexorable conditions are, we may have a deep assurance that some such picture is being realized. If our own society is incompetent to meet the challenge, other societies will outstrip it in the endeavor to prosper and to shape the world of the future.

Happiness is not dependably won by further conquest of the external world through more technological achievements. That conquest will almost surely continue to be won. But a far greater achievement is possible. There is a fulfillment of the spirit, which is open to everyone and can be gained under any external conditions. Its appeal is weak at first. The self-centered ego in each of us does not want to perish. It fights strenuously against that doom, so many mistaken ways of meeting the problem of life are tried.

What is the rewarding token of fulfilling the vital requirement ?

Not happiness, but joy in life—and not the transient and vulnerable joy of carrying through some arduous exploit, but the enduring and invulnerable joy of knowing that the ultimate problem of life has been solved and that one's whole self in union with the whole of his universe is being realized. That joy shows itself in glad acceptance of and faithfulness in one's daily responsibilities ; it exemplifies sensitive and responsive oneness with men and women of all capacities and all frailties or follies ; it is natural expression of perceiving everything in a halo of glory, wonder, and radiance. It cannot be gained by aggressive striving ; that may easily block its coming. It has to come in its own way and at its own pace. Such joy does not depend on external forces. A vivid testimony of one fully experiencing this uplifting strength is given in Jesus' words to his disciples at the Last Supper : "I have told you these things so that you might have the joy I have had and your joy might be complete."*

* John 15 : 11.

Perhaps the familiar phrase "the Kingdom of heaven on Earth" can be reinterpreted so as to mean a community of persons freed from emotional attachment to finite things, in this ever growing fulfillment. In such a community all social institutions—educational, political, religious, economic—will be gradually pervaded and reshaped to harmonize with the underlying spirit of wholeness. And one who is playing his part in the quest for that reshaping can live in the beloved community even now; he enjoys sustaining fellowship with others, few or many, who are also playing their part, and he is in accord with the All-Encompassing Wholeness we call "God."

CHAPTER IV

Toward A Greater Humanity

Toward A Greater Humanity

1

Has some progress already been made toward the greater humanity thus envisioned—progress by mankind as a whole ?

Chapter I affirmed that the slow growth of civilized out of primitive life has been progress, not just change ; outstanding gains have been made that no one would wish to lose. But that growth has also brought menacing evils not yet conquered. And Chapter III reminds us that there are evils in each person ; we have surveyed some of the forms they take and the process through which men are slowly outgrowing them.

Now we turn again to man in society. Is progress revealed in that setting ? Can we see significant and hopeful trends in social life ?

Let us look first at the deep-lying forces in man's political and social evolution, then at those disclosed in the history of science and of religion. Discouraging facts are easily visible in these areas, and we must be sure to face them with full realism. What encouraging facts can also be seen ? Is growth evident, or only change ?

In this orientation, two phases of political and social history especially invite us to explore them. One is the way any civilized society maintains its necessary unity in the midst of the forces that foment disunity. Progress in this important regard is visible. When one traces the history of methods used to preserve social order, he can see a slow transition from attempts to do this by ruthless coercion to a more humane way of achieving the end sought. A particular change that stands out is in the punishments for crime generally regarded as appropriate. Although torture

to elicit confessions has in our day become more widespread than in the past, it is not legally approved ; in fact, many harsh punishments have been abandoned and a concern to rehabilitate criminals has become evident.

Consider how political units have been formed and held together. In the very ancient empires quite brutal methods were often used. But it gradually came to be realized that enduring allegiance can be won only by a government that assures its citizens a large measure of security, justice, and opportunity. Thus over the centuries the harsher methods came to be replaced by ones less harsh.

Reconnoitering history with this thought in mind, some stages in the process can be identified and described. Already more than dimly visible is a change from the use of *threat* as the main way of forming a viable social order and of dealing with foreign nations to an ever greater use of the way of *exchange*.^{*} The essence of each of these two is simple. One who adopts the way of threat is saying : "You give me what I want or I'll do something you don't want." One who adopts the way of exchange is saying : "You give me what I want and I will give you what you want." One who practises the way of threat assumes that those threatened can be forced by fear to serve his interest, not their own. The method of exchange assumes that the interests of both sides are important and should be promoted by any relation between them. Today, as a primary policy of men in government, the way of threat seems to be waning. Terrorism benumbs people ; they may succumb, but are very inefficient servants of those who resort to it.

Look at the near collapse of colonialism in our day. That policy relied fully on the method of threat ; by military occupation and police control the "natives" were kept in subjection so that profitable exploitation of their resources could successfully proceed. But over the years it became less and less profitable, and is now almost abandoned. The method of exchange has been proving more advantageous as well as more humane.

A surprising and instructive step from the way of threat to the way of exchange is the recent transformation of the relation between America and the two great Communist countries. That relation had been one of grim hostility, with threats brandished on each side. The essence of the

^{*} I borrow these terms from Kenneth Boulding. See his *The Meaning of the 20th Century* (New York, Harper and Row, 1964), especially Chapters I and IV.

transformation is that peaceful coexistence is now officially accepted by all participants, and it is explicitly recognized that this means adopting the method of exchange, and pursuing mutual advantage instead of continuing to pursue one's own advantage to the disadvantage of the rival. The American and Chinese Communique of February 27, 1972 says that the two signatories commit themselves to the principles of "equality, mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence," and agree that any dispute between them "should be settled on this basis, without resorting to the use or threat of force."* The Declaration of Principles in the American and Soviet Communique of May 29 in the same year says that the participants are "prepared to settle differences by peaceful means....in a spirit of reciprocity, mutual accommodation, and mutual benefit." It is specifically stated that efforts by one side to obtain unilateral advantage at the expense of the other, directly or indirectly, are inconsistent with these objectives.** The agreements thus reached do not mean that dangerous suspicion between the superpowers has been ended. Relapses toward the atmosphere of the cold war occur and must be expected from time to time. But in the long historical context there is every indication that these agreements do mean a definite turn from the way of threat toward the way of exchange.

During the Cold War of two decades ago the predominant attitude on both sides of the Iron Curtain was very close to this : It is better that the whole world should perish than that our enemies should win ! Now there are signs of a shift to the attitude : It is better that all should live, even though the enemy is not destroyed.

2

What has been happening in the present period of civilization to the status of the ordinary citizen, who lacks both political and intellectual power to influence the course of events ? When I survey his situation today in comparison with what has obtained in the past, I see a phenomenal rise of the common people all over the world, more and more insistently demanding their share in the values of civilized life. An auspicious prospect is slowly opening up for the masses who have

* At present, the establishment of full diplomatic relations between Communist China and the United States seems to promise long continuation of peaceful coexistence.

** See the texts as given in the *New York Times* for February 28 and May 30, 1972.

hitherto performed the menial tasks for their fellows with little more than an opportunity for continued existence as their reward.

In the typical tribal society there was often a goodly measure of individuality and freedom for each person. But when the big empires controlled from a center of royal power expanded over such societies, the common people in them lost most of the independence their forebears had enjoyed and were easily manipulated by whoever held the reins of government. Ignorant, powerless, and disunited, they could do little but submissively accept their lot as pawns in the hands of others. They suffered and died quietly, often unaware of the injustice because they did not picture themselves as capable of any happier lot.

Today, however, a significant difference is apparent. Not so many are willing to accept that degrading fate. Slavery, which for several thousand years was the most flagrant expression of man's inhumanity to man, is largely a thing of the past. As it began to wane, the next widely practised social pattern, feudalism, spread in one form or another over much of the world. A slave has no rights as a human being ; but the lowest class in a feudal society does have some rights which at times have been fairly well protected.

However, the realization is steadily growing that feudalism too is inhuman and unstable. The present century reveals a gradual undermining of the feudal structure of society and a growing perception that it is not enough to achieve a good participated in only by some elite ; all men and women must share in it. The feudal aristocracy in Britain has lost its long unquestioned position. The revolution gaining momentum in Latin America, Africa, and Asia expresses in large part a swelling demand of the common people to participate in the more satisfying life that, as they look at what the middle classes have achieved in Europe and North America, is evidently possible. They see that hunger, exhausting toil, lack of education, ill health, and early death do not need to be their fate. And they demand liberation not merely from these shocking evils but also from the racial humiliations and caste indignities many of them have been forced to bear. The bitterest evil of both slavery and feudalism may well be that except for the few who hold power no opportunity is provided for the real participation in the present and hopeful anticipation of the future that is a deep longing of all men.

Reflect in this setting on the history of revolutions. As ambitious revolutionary leaders follow each other in winning a position of authority, they gradually discover that their power can be maintained only by

establishing a broader base of popular support ; hence classes hitherto ignored are one by one brought into the mainstream of social and political life. So, as such leaders appear from time to time, the more recent ones on the whole are concerned for the good of a larger segment of the populace. When America gained independence, a share in political power was given to a wider group of citizens than had enjoyed it in the European countries from which they came. The leaders of the Communist revolution in China are obviously concerned for the good of all who labor in school or field or factory. One token of this widening participation is the gradual extension of the suffrage—to the poor, to women, to racial minorities, to teen-agers. And when people have the right to vote they cannot be callously manipulated by rulers with no real concern for their welfare, especially when education becomes open to all. They must be persuaded, and in the long run this is possible only when they see that their basic needs are being met. In brief, the common man is slowly becoming aware of his strength, and those who seek power are responding to his aspirations.

Some thinkers, strongly impressed by the repressive force of government, fear that an era of disciplined conformity looms ahead, in which large populations will be successfully kept under dictatorial control. For a time in many societies that fear is likely to be confirmed. To a realistic view the masses are not only credulous and submissive but are often foolish, impetuous, and fickle. When that is the case they can be misled by a clever politician.

At this point we must face a very sobering fact about men and women, a fact posing immense difficulty for democracy. In every society, whatever its form of political organization, there are a few leaders and many who are led. The former are the intelligent shapers of the way of life exhibited by their society, and the latter are the common citizens who more or less passively follow that way. The leaders have the initiative and bent for bold action which make them natural claimants for a leading role, and are moved by many desires besides the desire for the good of their society. As for the led, many of them long to be cared for and to remain in the dependent status of a child. Such persons are easily induced to acquiesce in the exercise of power over them. The stubborn problem thus created stands out when one looks at the ambitious men who here or there are vaulting into controlling positions. Some are skillful propagandists for an appealing ideology ; some are captive to bitter disillusionment and know how to stir resentful passion in those around them ; a few are authentic leaders who respond to the real needs of their

people ; and occasionally there appears a true statesman, whose appearance is a blessing to the whole world. But these qualities may be deceptively mixed, especially in a leader with more than his share of "charismatic" charm.

In this situation the democratic faith is that the common man, however weak he may now be, can learn to tell the difference between the seductions of self-seeking leaders and the appeal of those who would lead in a wise direction. But time is needed to free his sound moral intuition from confusion about complex problems of policy and from the persuasiveness of a spellbinder. The man of aggressive force is still admired as well as feared. Not yet, very widely, is the man of true strength recognized and trusted.

So it is not surprising that many people readily succumb to the captivating influence of a "father figure" whom they trust to make important decisions for them, or to that of a mellifluous talker who promises to give them everything they want. In an arena pervaded by this submissive response, the accepted maxim is : "Follow the leader." No wonder that the leaders are constantly tempted by greed for power, wealth, or fame shrewdly to advance their ends rather than the real ends of the group, while those being led are usually too docile, ignorant, disunited, or absorbed in their own narrow concerns to prevent them from doing so. Our insistent challenge is to understand this situation with full realism, while cherishing the fundamental ideal of democracy—the Ideal of Government by the people as well as of the people and for the people.

Every organized group of men and women needs a centre of power which can act vigorously toward its ends. But an effective check on the use of that power is also needed, and a major token of progress over the centuries is wider participation by its members in exercising that check. Democracy cannot function without a large body of citizens able to make up their own minds on the moral issues of their time and ready to refuse obedience to any dictatorial threat. Such persons will profit by wise leadership but will not blindly follow a leader.

Two facts give encouragement to a realistic champion of the democratic way. One is that a charismatic leader—even a deranged Hitler—wants to create something through his leadership that will endure, and this want can succeed only if he pursues an end that satisfies the persistent needs of common men and women around him. Otherwise he is sooner or later condemned as a fraud. The other fact is that among the

intelligent seekers for leadership there are true champions of humanity as well as seekers for their own profit and power. Those persons have the compassion and understanding of the spiritual pioneers. They treat the common people as fellow human beings to be respected, undeterred by the ignorance and fickleness that is so evident ; they are even concerned to awaken in ordinary men and women the creative possibilities that would otherwise remain hidden. In their presence others begin to realize who can be trusted as a leader. One characteristic is that he does not want to be unthinkingly obeyed. He wants the independent capacity in his fellows to emerge and grow. As a person becomes aware of his interests and talents he demands opportunity to express them.* The opportunity hoped for often fails to come, but over the centuries a persistent trend is visible toward liberating the individual from needless restraints and toward giving him a larger role in the institutions that control his life.

Charismatic enchantment of the masses is a situation in which a significant body of citizens easily acquiesce in the exercise of control by a persuasive leader, allowing their acquiescence to shut out any disturbing awareness of his limitations. When quite blind, it can take appalling forms, even among supposedly educated people. In 1961 Americans were horrified to learn that a man named Charles Manson had so captivated a number of young men and women that they were ready to carry out his orders even if it meant committing murder. But the imperatively needed lesson is slowly learned. Discriminating judgment is by and large more often shown today than it was in the past. In America one token of this change is that political parties can no longer count on the readiness of a large number of their members to vote the party line, come what may.

The true leader and the common people need each other. The leader can dependably lead only by intuiting what the ordinary citizen is vaguely groping toward. And his reforms are firmly established only when they have become grounded in the experience of common men and women. The ideal situation which can more and more be approached is that all members of a society are leaders in the areas where they have special talent and experienced judgment, while in other areas being led by those who are especially competent. The force of charisma can be gradually reduced to its legitimate role.

* See in this connection Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock*, *op. cit.*, especially Part IV.

3

A quite crucial question arises : What is the basic right that men and women everywhere long for and is gradually being won ?

I propose as the answer : It is the right to be treated as full human beings, with dignity and respect. Freedom from poverty, ignorance, and disease is not enough ; indeed, continued deprivation in such matters will be endured if this right is recognized so that hope for the future can be felt. When people are not acutely suffering, the most unbearable evil is the emotional hurt of being treated with callous aloofness or pharisaic condescension. A belittling mode of address is one form of this evil. The blacks in the southern states of America felt a heartening uplift when they were addressed as a white person would be instead of on the assumption of black inferiority.

Now the word which expresses the goal of that growing aspiration is the word "equality". But this word is puzzling. Obviously it does not mean equality of possessions, or income, or vocational resources, and yet wide disparity in these respects is clearly incompatible with the ideal of equality. Despite this difficulty, who can seriously doubt the intensity of the aspiration for equality ? Not only do the colored races of the world demand that they be dealt with as full human beings by the recently dominant white race ; children long for this respect on the part of adults, and eagerly respond when they feel it to be given. Women are no longer content with partial equality. Let us postpone the quest for a definition of this word, asking first how progress toward full equality is dependably won and why that progress is so difficult.

In any society at any given time there are unjustified inequalities that are not felt to be such because they have long been accepted. But when the injustice is widely recognized it can no longer be tolerated by conscientious citizens, and a swelling will to correct it appears.

The men who wrote the American Declaration of Independence accepted as just the institution of slavery, although it drastically violates the moral principles proclaimed in that document. A long established injustice seems to be just to those who benefit from it, and also to many who suffer from it—they do not see themselves as able to fill any different role. The legal system prevailing at the time takes it for granted. But today, all over the world, people are becoming aware that many of the deprivations they have been subject to are unwarranted. And they have redoubtable allies in the social reformers who see those deprivations

as morally repugnant and are eager to help them. The outcome is that while for many milleniums it was taken for granted almost everywhere that people are naturally unequal, now inequality must increasingly be justified ; privileged possessors of wealth and power have to make it plausible if they can that their special status is serving the common good. A great historical change in the direction of equality has been coming about.

How can this slow progress of the common man be wisely understood ?

First, the course of history is radically dynamic, hence moral insight is not static ; it is ever evolving. Many practices generally regarded as just at any given time will appear indefensible prejudices to a later, more sensitive age. So moral concepts need to be, and are, revised from time to time. Not only does such a broad concept as "justice" undergo changes ; the same happens with quite specific concepts. Look at the history of theft. Not many generations ago a thief might be punished by cutting of his hands, or even by death. Such harsh punishments are now viewed as intolerably unjust, and further changes are surely coming. Most moralists today I presume would define theft as "taking something owned by another person, without his permission." Gandhi's ethical sensitivity, however, led him to a bold revision of its meaning ; he once defined it as "the retaining by one person of anything that some other person needs more." That definition may in time become widely persuasive ; if so, all moral concepts and legal practices related to theft will be transformed to accord with it. A more likely possibility in the near future is that the right of one person to accumulate great wealth while others live in squalor will be condemned as unjust and lose its legal protection.

Second, in this setting several stubborn obstructions to the winning of equality can be easily understood. An obstruction obvious everywhere is the deepseated urge on the part of many people to have some group on whom they can smugly look down. Their self-righteous demand that a privileged status for them be acknowledged is often very strong. But there are obstructions not yet generally realized. Reflect on the persistent tendency to treat negroes as inferior. The complacent conceit of white people in their relation to the black race surely rests in part on the contrast between these colors that has gathered force over the milleniums. "White" has in the West been associated, for readily understandable reasons, with light, truth, purity, and goodness in general ; "black" with darkness, deception, and everything sinister. These associations are

powerful, and exert an unconscious influence even on those who are consciously free from racial bias.

How are such obstructions overcome, and man's current practices transformed, in the direction of equality ?

Several forces are at work in that direction. But a strong and steady force through the centuries is the humane compassion exemplified clearly in the spiritual leaders. They have been pioneers toward a richer individuality and fuller equality. In this they contrast with political, military, industrial, and even educational leaders. Their inspired insight is that nothing but the best is good enough for man, and for all men. A generous soul, open to the divine everywhere, will recognize the special promise in talented men, but his deepest concern is to befriend the lowliest among his fellows and to awaken their hidden possibilities. One of the most moving chapters in the Christian gospels is Matthew 25, whose message centers on the verse : "Whatever you do for one of these my brothers, however humble, you do for me." Rabindranath Tagore has given poetic expression to this compassionate concern in Stanza X of his *Gitanjali* :

"Leave this chanting and singing and telling
of beads ! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely
dark corner of a temple with doors all shut ?
Open thine eyes and see, thy God is not before
thee !"

"He is where the tiller is tilling the
hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking
stones. He is with them in sun and shower, and
his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy
holy mantle and like him come down on the dusty
soil !"

Spiritual seers have perceived the tempting pride that is likely to be met in men who have won worldly success or intellectual prestige. And they saw that no major truth or insight is securely established till it becomes rooted in the feelings and habits of common people, although that may take much time.

What then is the basic meaning of equality ? The example of the pioneers and their responsive followers seems to say : In virtue of his unique capacity every person, no matter how lowly, has something to give as well as to receive, something to teach as well as to learn, something to express that no one else can express—hence to respect him is to be sensitive to his distinctive possibilities. At bottom men are equal

because every person has irreplaceable and therefore infinite value. A corollary is that while the grave problem posed by the "population explosion" must surely be solved, we should welcome the largest population whose needs can be humanely provided for. Every man and woman harbors unique possibilities, and can contribute in his or her own way to the enriching experience of humanity. Walt Whitman said : "Only what nobody denies is so."* I will replace this statement by "Whatever any person sincerely affirms is so." That is, it is his way, at the time, of expressing something he has experienced. The moral orientation of the past almost everywhere failed to free itself from an insensitive denial of this ultimate value of the common man.

The world community will then be a steadily enlarging and deepening fellowship in which each individual is creating and being re-created in his own way, with no questions needing to be asked about how his worth compares with that of others.

4

Since the second World War America has by her military and financial might held a dominant position in the world. The "American century" is well under way. How will the evolution and destiny of mankind be affected by living through it ? What is she contributing to the world community ?

Glance first at some outstanding traits of the American character. Easily visible is a strong demand for freedom of speech and action, zealous competitiveness, ready sociability, a persistent urge toward equality, increasing respect for scientific knowledge with a skeptical distrust of philosophy, and a fertile practical resourcefulness. These traits make for an aggressive industrial and business-centered civilization, whose brisk tempo contrasts with the leisurely pace of a religious, agricultural, or artistic civilization. The typical American has assumed that by inventive skill and energy man's adjacent environment can be mastered without delay and the whole world before long. He believes that "the difficult job we can do at once ; the impossible will take a little longer."

America's contribution to the world of the future will surely be an expression of these qualities. What attracts the rest of mankind, on the side of her ideals, is the principle that all legitimate government rests on

* *Song of Myself*, Satnza 30.

the free consent of the governed, and that every person has inalienable rights. What attracts on the material side is the talent shown by her development of industrial technology, with the more efficient production and distribution of goods thus made possible.

What does each of these sides reveal ?

Behind her ideal of free democracy is a fact of history—the adventurous break from the traditional castes of European society on the part both of the early colonists and the later waves of immigrants who crossed the Atlantic. They were eager to escape from the traditional restraints of European life and especially from religious persecution. They were ready to meet all the hazards that might confront them on a new continent. The slowly receding frontier in that continent was a constant challenge to their vitality and initiative.

Their successors have retained the self-reliant and bustling enterprise thus displayed. The most noticeable quality of Americans as compared with many other peoples is their independent resourcefulness. Put a typical American in a difficult situation, and without needing instruction from any mentor he will do something to meet it. Hence individual initiative and opportunity for its expression have been persistently prized. Americans are the most energetic exemplifiers of the mobile attitude toward life that has arisen in the modern West. A major token of this attitude is their complete abandonment of the hoary assumption that everyone should continue in the habitat, vocation, and social status of his family. They renounced the feudal structure of European society. The hitherto almost universal attachment of people to their land or village and to the ancestral heritage rooted in it has been left behind. There is no caste system ; no man's identity is decided for him by the accident of birth. So Americans move with little hesitation from one location or job to another, ready to make the most of any new opportunities. To be sure, what can be described as a moneyed oligarchy has replaced the feudal aristocracy of the past. But the aggressive seekers for business profit who dominate American life do not form a rigid upper class ; no one who strives to rise into their company is blocked from the start by any irrelevant handicap.

A prominent feature of American politics is the steady realization that if this mobility is to be preserved and progress toward a better future is always to be possible, the right of any individual or minority to dissent from what is now generally believed, and publicly to express that dissent, must be maintained. That right is frequently threatened but it is firmly embedded and is legally well protected.

This freedom to dissent and to criticize also reveals the strain of egalitarianism that pervades American life. Nothing arouses quicker criticism than any pretension to special authority or wisdom or virtue. The prompt reaction to any such pretension is "Come off your high horse ! Who do you think you are ?" This egalitarian urge is shown in the habitual feelings of people toward each other. Not only are aristocratic titles disliked ; even "Mr." is left behind when two people become acquainted enough to use each other's first name, which they wish to do as soon as possible. There is almost no snobbish disdain of menial work, so often met elsewhere in the world.

Pass now to America's material contribution to the world of the future. It can be described in a single phrase—her remarkable genius for scientific technology and business management. This talent began to develop in Europe. But the exuberant resourcefulness it expresses came to full flower in America ; it is the dominant force in the civilization she has been building. Scientific knowledge is pursued as vigorously elsewhere, but skill in technological engineering and the proficient organization of industry has been outstandingly displayed in the United States.

The American empire which is annexing much of the world is not a political empire nor does it now depend on military supremacy (although many still think it does) ; it is an empire of expanding manufacture, finance, and trade, built under the guiding hand of its ambitious business executives. At the heart of this empire today are the odd "conglomerates" and aggressive "multi-national corporations" whose global ventures and financial power increasingly affect the life of everyone. They can engage in the intensive research which small companies cannot afford—research needed for developing new products and improving old ones. The confident outreach of their leaders meets resistance from time to time. But the decisive fact, not forgotten for long by any perceptive statesman, is that the world's problems today are insoluble without the aid of American business enterprise and technological efficiency.

Should we look in this direction if we are to perceive America's big contribution to the humanity of the future ?

Americans are eager to believe that their great contribution is the ideal of democratic freedom and the social institutions that aim to realize it. That is indeed important. But freedom can be a menace as well as a high promise. It seems to mean, very often, the right of any individual or group to pursue its present aims with no responsible concern for the long run good of all—to picture it as freedom for *me* and *my* associates

from whatever blocks *our* ambitious quest for wealth, prestige or control. Whenever any conflict arises at home or abroad between the democratic ideal and the unbridled pursuit of profit or power, the latter usually wins out, or is curbed only with great difficulty. The American faith in democracy appears as yet to be only half-hearted. So the significant and enduring contribution lies, it would seem, in America's economic achievements. She has shown the world that freedom from dearth and poverty is possible for a large population.

Let us see what instruction may lie in this thought. In the pre-civilized past all but a few men and women were condemned to spend most of their time and energy in providing the bare necessities of continued existence. America has been leading the way toward an economy of abundance which could be realized for all people. True, that outcome is possible only when the harsh problems of population, war, and the exhaustion of limited resources are humanely solved, and compassionate concern for mankind along with the available know-how is devoted to this end. Time- and labor-saving machines—impressive though the triumph they have won is—become a curse unless they bring an era of free and happy fulfillment for everyone. Some lethargy in the common people must also be overcome; however, a virtue of American culture in the past has been the encouragement of initiative in all who are capable of it, with the assurance of generous rewards for those who succeed. That this prospect holds spiritual as well as material promise is evident when one envisions how such control over nature's productivity could serve the artistic, philosophical, and religious progress of humanity and of each individual.

In the faith that this is the direction evolution will take, and that America's future will thus be greater than her past, we shall examine a notable current trend in her industrial life. At first sight it might appear a very threatening trend.

Consider the rapidly accelerating automation of productive processes that is visible on every hand. It is clearly a natural expression of developing technology as applied to industry. It promises more production and wider distribution at lower cost, so one would expect it to continue until all but a small fraction of productive activity is performed by machines. Under present conditions this is likely to mean a continuing increase in unemployment, because fewer and fewer workers are required. But when the essential needs of everyone can be taken care of in this way, and the governing motive of production and distribution is to serve the needs of people rather than to make inflated profits for a few, the

humane blessing of automation can be realized. An end may come to the sway of the ancient presupposition that a family's share in available goods and services must depend on the productive labor of its workers. The right to an income required for a dignified life can become a justified addition to the recognized rights of man. The United States may thus, in her own way, take a notable step toward realizing the Marxist ideal: "From each according to his ability; to each according to his need." She may lead the world toward an epoch in which mankind will be freed from preoccupation with elementary physical necessities. The guiding idea in socially constructive automation will be to develop time-saving conveniences and labor-saving instruments wherever possible and to expand the democratic distribution of their products. In that situation a growing social conscience would insist that a minimal standard of comfortable living be assured for everyone. A "negative income tax" will more and more be accepted as just, in order to make sure that this goal is achieved.*

Poverty and want will then no longer be feared; each person would be given a real opportunity to develop his talents and there would be a vigorous incentive to express them. Instead of being a menacing evil automation can become a splendid blessing to humanity. All people could be happily active in many rewarding ways for which there was no time when almost the whole day had to be drearily spent by the vast majority in satisfying the elementary needs of life. America may thus free mankind from preoccupation with the material conditions of a fulfilling life.

This process will very likely be furthered by several specific developments, of which two may be mentioned. More "nonprofit" corporations will appear, and serve human needs in more varied ways than the promotion of art, health, and education exemplified in those that now exist. And a new class of business entrepreneurs will exert increasing influence—men and women whose moving aim is not to make a profit but to achieve success in some novel form, especially a form promoting human welfare in areas now neglected, and a spirit of brotherhood where ruthless competition has reigned.

What exhilarating possibilities for mankind lie ahead when aggressive greed has been overcome by social-mindedness and a wholesale reorganization of society on that foundation has begun to fill its role in history!

* That is, those whose income is insufficient to provide the necessities of life for themselves and their families will be given what they need by the government instead of paying a tax.

5

When China and the rest of the world are ready for it, the Chinese century will begin. How will human life be affected during that century? What special gift can that Far Eastern country bring to the evolving community of man?

Before answering, let us pause to look in broad perspective at both China and India—those two great peoples of the Far East, each of them more than twice as populous as any other country. If a Westerner is to understand them, he must lay aside his ingrained superiority complex; and when he does so he may discern that in the perspective of human history Europe is an offshoot of Asia and America an offshoot of Europe. These energetic occidental progeny have achieved something that the future will not wish to lose, and this truth is now evident to everyone. But all enduring progress is moral and spiritual progress; China and India have learned the heart of that lesson much better than the West. What the West has been providing is the technological base on which such progress can be realized more fully and by more people. It may well be that today, as in past centuries, the main current of civilized evolution is the current sweeping slowly onward in the Far East.

It was in Asia that all the great religions were born, and the Far East produced more than its share of them. Religion guides men in finding the truly good life here and now, and also in reconnoitering beyond the horizon of the here and now. In the long run China may prove a unique resource when one's eyes are focussed on the earthly community and the art of living this life wisely, while India is such a resource when one lifts his sights toward the fulfillment transcending every mundane goal.

The overriding event of the twentieth century is the rebirth of China. Here is a nation undergoing one of the drastic social transformations that rarely occur. She has a population of eight hundred million or more—nearly one-fourth of the human race. Her people are talented, industrious, and alert; they have taken shrewd advantage of a favorable environment. Their thinkers have been familiar with an essentially dynamic view of life ever since the ancient classic entitled *The Book of Changes* appeared. Today they are engaged in mastering modern technology while ensuring productive work for everyone during the process.

I see three outstanding and salutary qualities in the Chinese people.

One is an unusual capacity to foresee the future effects of any course of action. Hence to subordinate the appealing short-run advantage to the long-run good is a lesson they have in high degree mastered. They can be patient.

A second quality is shown in China's perennial openness to learn from other peoples. Of course she has been proud of her own form of civilization ; she looks upon herself as the "Middle Kingdom", superior in everything important to all other peoples. Yet along with assured confidence in their own virtues—perhaps *as* one vital virtue—the Chinese have been tolerant of different ways of life and thought with which they become acquainted, and receptive to whatever values there might be in them. To be sure, it takes time for the full effect of this openness to be shown. Buddhism was introduced into China early in the Christian era, but it took several centuries and the coming of many Buddhist missionaries before the new religion could make its permanent stamp on Chinese culture.

A third quality is the keen capacity of the Chinese for understanding human nature. That capacity has been shown throughout the past, especially in Confucianism. Today their Communist leaders are not allowing a Marxist orientation to block awareness of all the important forces at work in man, nor of how those forces might be guided toward fulfillment in a viable social order. Their main concern in dealing with suspected spies or counter-revolutionaries has been, not to destroy them but to convert them into constructive participants in the new society. At its best this concern becomes an effort to bring about enduring moral renovation, so that everyone will be sincerely committed to the equalitarian well-being of all.*

In the light of these important qualities, how should the essence of the Communist revolution in China be best described ?

A radical upheaval has taken place in the lives, fundamental attitudes, and hopeful expectations of the Chinese people, and it has been so interpreted as to assure a vital role for the primary values precious to them through the centuries. The framework of Marxism-Leninism as they conceive it has been stretched so that this synthesis became possible. In fact, Mao Tse-tung's interpretation of Communism is continuous in

* A particularly revealing picture of how this can be attempted is given in Allyn and Adele Rickett, *Prisoners of Liberation*, New York (Cameron Associates, Inc.), 1956, *passim*.

many major ways with traditional Confucian values, especially as emphasized by Mencius. The touchstone of good government for both is the welfare of the common people. W.A.C.H. Dobson says : "It has been the genius of Mao to have converted the terminology and certain of the principles of Marx into Chinese terms that evoke a response in China, a response as much of reassuring familiarity as of innovation."* One must not be misled by the attacks on Confucianism by Communist leaders that identify it with its now unacceptable features.

The outstanding transformation already evident is that after China's prolonged period of weakness the Communists have brought strength and the vision of a better life, along with the discipline needed to realize it. The constructive changes that impress one who has known China in the past appear visibly in the form of health in the countryside and cleanliness in the cities, equality for women and a responsible role for the young, rejection of the graft and corruption that had long been endemic, recognition of equal value for the manual as compared with the intellectual worker, and initial steps toward expanding family loyalty to embrace a larger whole—the neighborhood, the nation, and the world.

While recognizing this tremendous achievement and what it betokens, let us avoid the mistake of idealizing Communist China. Many Chinese were anxious enough when the revolution came to flee from the New China, and not all of them were old people unable to adjust to radical change or exploiters who feared drastic punishment. The China of the future will have to make a place for their values—especially for the value of individual initiative and freedom to dissent from the now ruling ideology. Already there is evidence that China is not escaping the customary aftermath of revolutions. There are factional contests among the leaders, with individuals likely to be disgraced who fall to be on the right side at the right time. The perennial vice of favoritism reemerges. Enthusiasm for the new equalitarian life wanes in the course of time ; the human follies and frailties familiar elsewhere are cropping up in China. Age-old evils, such as thievery and petty crime in the big cities, appear. A very sad sign is passionate and persistent hostility toward the Soviet Union.

But these inevitable accompaniments of a revolutionary transmutation do not make it less than an epochal rebirth ; momentous for the whole world. The present reaction (1979) from an extreme Maoist policy does not mean abandonment of the socialist ideal, nor a return to

* See his column on p. 29M of the *New York Times* for January 30, 1973.

traditionalism. It does appear to mean some loss of premature forms of egalitarianism as now unworkable, and a realization that if the basic achievement of the revolution is to be preserved and developed, greater use of Western technology and industrial strategies must be made.

Turning now more specifically to the new China's gift to the humanity of the future, does it include something deeper than a more promising form of socialism than the West has known ?

I believe the answer is "yes". That answer would rest on a realization that the Chinese people possess much of the moral wisdom that is not so evident in the Western world but, lacking which, a modernized technology can become a calamity instead of a blessing. Here lies China's greatest source of strength and her most valuable contribution to the community of man. Her people have learned, with unusual perceptiveness, how to live. Their present leaders appear to have avoided the serious error into which both Communists and non-Communists in the West easily fall—the error of assuming that economic development and the comfortable affluence it can bring are ultimate values.

Chinese thinkers have realized through the centuries that "Man does not live by bread alone" ; far more important is the humane sensitivity without which material possessions lose their value and steady growth toward a finer fulfillment is impossible. Their way of life and thought has been permeated by the awareness that only through a deepening accord with Heaven, with nature, and with his fellows, can man truly fulfill himself. When they look westward, they see the typical Occidental "seemingly devoid of any philosophy that might enable him to live in harmony with the world as it is."* In relation to man's natural environment the West is threatened with ecological catastrophe while the Chinese have recognized the imperative need to develop a life-style in full collaboration with environing forces. In the interaction of persons with each other, they have never lost the conviction that the true greatness of man is moral greatness, grounded in and growing through his social relationships. A. W. Hummel summarized this insight when he said : "The art of making life livable by lending dignity and self-respect to fellow human beings, whatever their position in life, was for the Chinese a clearly

* Dennis Bloodworth, *The Chinese Looking Glass*, New York, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1966, p. 6.

acknowledged goal."* A revealing bit of evidence is the genial tact which a visitor among them is almost sure to meet.

Their Communist leaders today, viewing the ambitions of the Western superpowers, declare that China wishes to appear before the world not as a great power but as a great people. The difference is significant. They realize that if a nation is to survive and prosper in an age of intensified interaction between peoples everywhere, it must exemplify the basic social virtues that a good individual exemplifies—slowness to anger, patience with human frailty and folly, sensitivity to the needs of others, and readiness for mutually acceptable modes of cooperation.

Moreover, if armed conflict should become a grave threat to them the Chinese may practice, better than Western nations, a strategy put into words by one of their novelists: "An angry man can always be outwitted."** This is also true of an angry nation. When its aims are frustrated it loses patience and its foresight of consequences is dimmed; thus it can be outwitted by those who are more patient and more aware of the consequences.

No wonder that, as China devotes herself to the intensive development of modern technology with its fruitful application to agriculture and industry, it has thus far taken a form in essential accord with the humane values of her tradition.

Political thinkers need to realize that the new China is contributing insight that may prove quite significant in the theory and practice of democracy. Many in the West have been enticed into an unrealistic psychology of human nature, assuming that any man or woman, if educated at least, is able to vote wisely on even the most complicated issues of public policy. The Maoist orientation is aware that this is not the case. But it refuses to renounce the sociomoral ideal of universal participation in the adoption and implementation of important decisions. Democracy must be rule by all the people. The crucial question then is: How to secure and maintain the conditions under which this rule can be real and effective? The Chinese answer seems to be: There must be frequent meetings and discussions in which there will be universal participation, at all levels of the decision-making process. The Westerner sees in this method much waste of time spent in interminable argumentation.

* See "The Art of Social Relations in China," in *Philosophy East and West*, April-July 1960, p. 13.

** See Arthur Waley, *The Real Tripitaka*, New York, 1952, p. 256.

But from the Chinese viewpoint such discussion is necessary in order that every citizen may genuinely take part in proposing policies, evaluating alternatives, and understanding the outcome reached. Only thus can he help intelligently in carrying the decisions out. If in any given issue he holds to an opinion that is rejected, he will understand why it did not succeed and will have no resentful feeling that an unwelcome decision was imposed on him. Here is a practical program for democratic government that may well in the future be widely adopted.

How then should the fundamental social change that Chinese Communism has brought be described ?

It appears to be a change from the conservative aristocratic pattern taken for granted in China's pre-Communist culture toward a forward-looking equalitarian brotherhood, with considerable scope for personal fulfillment to all who accept the aims of that brotherhood. May we conclude that as America is revealing to the world the ideal and practice of democratic individualism, China is revealing the ideal and practice of democratic socialism ?

6

In the more distant future an Indian century may dawn. Firmly and deeply rooted in her way of life, India has a magnificent gift for the world. But for it to be exemplified and communicated, Indian leaders need to be more confident of its supreme value than they are now, and the rest of the world needs to become more receptive to its distinctive promise.

It is embedded in India's religious ideal. Just as the Greeks showed a special aptitude for philosophy and art, the Romans for law and social organization, the British for political liberty, and Americans for industrial engineering, so the people of India have found in religion a value which challenges their capacity to the full. The great leaders who stand out in their history were consumed by a passion for the divine, and that passion has sufficiently permeated Indian culture so that the persons most respected, most looked to for guidance in its development, have been the religious pioneers and saintly prophets. Millions of people in India will gather to share in an experience of "darshana",* or for a special religious

* A vision, or spiritual realization.

festival. President Radhakrishnan, when head of state in India, took time every day for meditative communion with God.

But that dominant orientation has been unable as yet to transform her social and political institutions. It has exerted some molding power from time to time, but the gap between mystical otherworldliness and the daily life of people in this world has been very difficult to bridge. The men and women who administer practical affairs, in India and in other countries, must come to view man as a spiritual being with superterrestrial as well as terrestrial capacities, and to realize that a religious orientation can be forward-looking and non-dogmatic. In such an arena India's characteristic perspective, growing out of her Buddhist and Hindu heritage, could fill a brilliant role.

Any picture that might be drawn now of that possible future scene would surely differ in many features from the form it actually takes. Perhaps, however, a very general prophecy can be ventured : A human community could come into being that is closer to the vista of the pioneers than any society thus far visible. India could lead mankind in developing a fertile bond between social structures and ever deepening spirituality, showing how all finite concerns can be transfigured when viewed in their relation to the Encompassing Infinite. Facing international tensions, such a renascent India would seek to remove the causes of war and to bring nations toward enduring reconciliation ; Gandhi's influence would thus be evident. Each institution in society would be so organized as to foster communion with the Divine as well as equalitarian brotherhood in all interactions of men and women with each other.

CHAPTER V

Science As A Major Guide On The Human Journey

Science As A Major Guide On The Human Journey

All people now live in the age of science. How that enterprise came to take its present form was sketched briefly in Chapter I. How is it affecting the experience of civilized man as he continues his journey? What lessons can its historical growth teach? Today it has won a position in which it exerts enormous influence on human life; not surprisingly, the prevalent attitudes toward it are varied.

There are those who stand in awe of its tremendous achievements; many of them expect it to provide as trenchant a solution of the second major problem of history—how to live successfully with one's fellows—as its solution of the problem how to master environing nature. They view science as most medieval thinkers viewed theology—as an exalted system of truth rightfully exercising authority over the whole of man's life. There are thinkers eager to imitate the methods of its most successful branches; among them are the social scientists who adopt the basic presuppositions of physical science and the philosophers who would make their field into a form of mathematical or linguistic analysis. But science deserves to be understood instead of blindly revered.

Even those who know science at first hand are strongly tempted to interpret its history in an unperceptive way. They seem oblivious to the fact that science is a mode of interaction between persons and other realities. They take for granted the present presuppositions of scientists about what knowledge essentially is and how true knowledge is dependably distinguished from deceptive claimants to that status. Thus its history is perceived as a process leading up to the present perspective of scientists and displaying occasional anticipations of it.

A deeply searching approach to science will probe more radically. Among other things it will seek to bring out what thinkers at different

times and places have taken science to be, and how they have conceived the knowledge thus established in its relation to the whole of life. An understanding of science can clarify major stages in the evolution of the human mind, for such a grasp of scientific history throws light on the way of thinking that now prevails among educated persons and shows how it has arisen out of different ways of thinking in the past.

1

But before proceeding with this quest, a word just used needs to be explained. It has already been indispensable, and will hereafter be more indispensable than ever. That word is "presupposition". What does it mean ?

A presupposition is a hidden (or at least tacit) premise underlying any assertion or question or piece of reasoning. A somewhat vaguer synonym is the more frequent word "assumption". Nothing can be thought or said that does not rest on presuppositions, hence illustrations appear wherever one looks for them.

A mother says to her protesting child, "if you eat your vegetables like a good boy you'll grow to be a strong man". She is presupposing that he wants to become a strong man, but that want is not always potent and perhaps even is absent. He may want to remain a carefree boy. In current vernacular, presuppositions are often called "hang-ups". That word sharply reveals the compulsive power by which they block a person's capacity to see important things, or make him overstress some things in comparison with others.

A presupposition usually fills its function unconsciously. Whoever presupposes it is thinking *with* it but not *about* it—*i.e.*, it is embedded in the part of his mind that is active at that time. The mother just referred to was not conscious of her presupposition, but anyone listening to her statement can see that it was actively at work in her mind ; without it she would not have said what she did. It is in this sense that it functions as a hidden premise. Some presuppositions widely held today that are largely unconscious include the following : Criminals should be drastically punished, for no other way of treating them protects society ; Communism is a terrible danger, that can only be met by military force ; the more money one makes, the happier he will be. These beliefs raise serious questions ; would they still be held when consciously reflected on ?

The vital role of presuppositions in man's experience and thought appears most vividly when we observe that besides such particular presuppositions there are more general ones, expressed in a whole cluster of ideas and even in the entire way of thinking characteristic of an individual or group. Those presuppositions are the ones that concern us. They are the mental spectacles through which everything is seen and explained. Hence in our perceiving and interpreting we never begin "from scratch"—*i.e.*, from an empty receptivity to anything that might enter our experience. We always begin with our present presuppositions, which are actively at work. Thus any view of life and the world is grounded in and held together by a set of quite general presuppositions which provide its framework. Everyone has such a view, even though it may be vague and vacillating.

World-views vary in many ways. But a very important variation, as one would expect from the preceding chapters, is in the strength of emotion and the breadth of awareness they manifest.

Consider an aggressive ideology. It obviously expresses strong emotion and the awareness in it is very limited. On that account it is fiercely defended in its conflict with competing world-views. Because of its passionate vehemence it erects a wall of dogmatic protection around the presuppositions to which an ideologist is committed. Not only does he shut out any facts that conflict with his system, he may feel himself to be wholly righteous in doing so. All who share his world-view appear allies who are on the side of the angels, while all who champion a different view are demonic agents of evil. Hence the bizarre spectacle in recent years of the ideological war between protagonists of Communism and protagonists of Capitalism, all being firmly convinced of their own form of this angel-demon dichotomy. Each deeply distrusts his opponents. This poisonous suspicion may even in their minds include the impartial thinkers whose concern is to understand both viewpoints. To the resolute partisan such impartiality looks like a willingness to let black appear white—or at least to let it lose its sinister blackness.

The perilous consequence of such dogmatism is illustrated in the head of government who refuses to listen to reports from his ambassadors that fail to fit his stubborn presuppositions. He decides crucial matters in self-imposed ignorance.

The most instructive illumination that comes from reflecting on the ubiquitous role of presuppositions is that a person can expand his

awareness not only within the framework of a given set of presuppositions (which is the case with all except a small fraction of his thinking) but also by passing from any given set to another, which takes into account considerations that the previous set has neglected. When he becomes aware of those considerations he sees that his previous presuppositions were limited and had to be revised. A great virtue of a long run perspective is that one sees people in general and thinkers in particular slowly passing from one set of inclusive presuppositions to another, and realizes that this is the way basic growth in our pursuit of knowledge and understanding takes place.

The whole history of man's progress seems to be a process of hidden presuppositions becoming conscious and the unacceptable ones replaced by more satisfactory alternatives.

2

The bearing of these thoughts on our present theme is that one who traces the history of science in a long run perspective will perceive important changes in its basic presuppositions and is concerned to understand how they came about. Certain very general presuppositions seem to be common to every stage in that history, such as (1) that there is some regular order in the objects and events scientists seek to understand, and (2) that scientists can and do keep the body of science free from any taint of their own personality. The first of these presuppositions still dominates all serious quests for knowledge, and it is hard to see how it could be surrendered. The second has dominated ancient and modern science down to the present century, but signs are increasing that now it must be drastically revised. If scientific investigation is one mode of interaction between men and other realities, and if all perception and explanation are relative, their part in the interaction cannot be ignored.

However, even with the first presupposition the changes that have taken place in the way it is conceived are very important. There are many possible ways of ordering the objects and events that are perceived ; they could be viewed in terms of their duration, their esthetic appeal, their economic value, the relation of whole and part, or other observable relations. The scientist's choice among them at any given time is determined by the values dominant among thinkers at that time. Their influence seems to be crucial. In the ancient world all but a few influential thinkers seem to have presupposed a pervasive causal

order that was systematically articulated by Aristotle—it held that science and metaphysical philosophy form a single body of knowledge, science dealing with the secondary causes and effects while metaphysics portrays the First Cause and shows how the other causes depend on it. The whole structure constituted what until recently was called “natural philosophy.” Those whom we would call philosophers were interested in the metaphysical side of this enterprise ; those whom we would call scientists—like Archimedes and Hipparchus—were concerned about relatively specific problems and the limited explanations they called for. Such men, however, seem to have taken for granted that a final explanation of the universe and of everything it contains is the valid goal of all quests for knowledge.

What dominant valuation underlay these presuppositions ? A very plausible answer is that it was man’s longing for security. When everything that happens is assigned its place in a comprehensive structure thus built, thinkers feel intellectually secure through the demonstrated and potentially complete explanation gained, and that achievement is the intellectual aspect of the urgent emotional security they also seek—the security of “at-home-ness” in the universe. In contrast, modern thinkers have become convinced that by verified truths organized in a different pattern that does not assume any metaphysical First Cause, men can increasingly control toward their chosen ends the processes going on in the world. “Cause” remains a central concept, but it is differently conceived. Instead of security in the universe, ever increasing mastery of environing nature is the dominant value of modern science, and its representatives presuppose the kind of causal order making possible the fullest realization of this value.

These striking changes bring out vividly how science reveals its relativity to man and especially to his dominant values as they evolve from time to time. Philosophy, art, morals, and religion are relative in the same way ; what happens in any of them is always a human activity which can become intelligible in its relation to some controlling value and a set of pervasive presuppositions.

3

In this long run perspective a fruitful understanding of science can be hopefully gained. My interpretation of it is especially subject to correction because, while I have long studied its history, I have had no

direct experience in a laboratory or in any scientific investigation. When I seek to understand the main stages in the history of civilized science, two especially revealing developments stand out.

The first is the long continuing emphasis on attaining knowledge that is exact and rationally demonstrable ; this emphasis is reflected in the supreme value assigned at an early epoch to geometry and to the other mathematical branches that from time to time appeared.

Its influence is revealed in several instructive ways. There is continued prizing of the distinctive virtues that can be attained in mathematics. If one seeks certainty and precision as the most important values, mathematical knowledge seems to show how these values can be realized. Even children find great satisfaction in a field of study where solutions are possible that are 100% perfect, leaving no margin of uncertainty. Another indication is the unflagging eagerness to explain the entire perceptual world as a mathematical structure and to develop a method that would assure success in that pursuit. Early in the 17th century Galileo confidently affirmed : "Philosophy (*i.e.*, the systematic investigation of the world) is written in that great book which ever lies before our eyes—I mean the universe—but we cannot understand it if we do not first learn the language and grasp the symbols in which it is written. This book is written in the mathematical language, and the symbols are triangles, circles, and other geometrical figures, without whose help it is impossible to comprehend a single word of it."* That belief encouraged the expectation that complete and final knowledge of the perceptual world can be won ; all that is needed is to find the right way of applying everywhere the geometrical axioms. In the next generation after Galileo Spinoza was sure that he had found the right way for a philosopher. He offered what he called a system of *Ethics Demonstrated in the Geometrical Manner*. It was more than ethics as conceived in our day ; it boldly demonstrated in geometrical form a metaphysical theory about the structure of the universe and a theological doctrine about the road to human salvation.

In such an orientation the tendency is strong to regard non-mathematical descriptions and explanations as merely preliminary to the true ones, which will in time replace them. There is also a strong tendency to assume that what can be dealt with mathematically in any group of facts is what is important about them ; anything that cannot be dealt with thus may be pushed aside as unimportant. This tendency has been

* *Opere complete*, Firenze, 1842, ff., Vol. IV, p. 171.

especially obvious in the social sciences as their practitioners strive to reach results acceptable to other scientists.

But this emphasis has had to contend increasingly with a second development, and over the centuries the latter won the primacy. It is a persistent emphasis on understanding the world disclosed by sense-perception, and a growing realization that the understanding sought cannot be won merely by perfecting our mathematical techniques. The adjective most widely used to characterize this emphasis is the adjective "empirical." It presupposes an *a posteriori* approach to the knowledge of perceptible objects and events, as compared with the *a priori* approach of the preceding emphasis—*i.e.*, it holds that the realm of facts can be soundly explained only after and on the basis of detailed observation of them, not before. It prizes the work of demonstrative reason as manifested in mathematics, but subordinates that faculty to sense-perception and whatever is revealed through it. The value of an inductive explanation by generalizing from perceived facts is placed on a par with the value of a deductive explanation from axioms assumed to be valid ; it is not just a necessary preliminary to the latter.

The success of empiricism means that the geometrical model of explanation has been tacitly abandoned so far as the world of perception is concerned ; knowledge can be accepted as such even though it is tentative and hypothetical when compared with the assured demonstrability of a mathematical theorem. And when this emphasis is adopted it requires a shift in the prevailing presupposition about mathematics—a shift historically revealed in the "non-Euclidean" geometries. Instead of being pictured as the language of nature, mathematics becomes a free deductive system resting on a set of axioms or postulates, which are no longer regarded as self-evident properties of space and motion. They have been adopted for the sake of scientific convenience and might be different from what they now are.

However, this portrayal of the emergence of modern science, accurate (I believe) so far as it goes, has left out the most important feature that makes contemporary science differ from its ancient and medieval forebears. That feature can be brought out trenchantly by observing that more than one presupposition about empiricism has prevailed in the course of history. Quite a few ancient thinkers were empiricists in the sense that they showed a thoroughgoing respect for perceived fact. Aristotle was one of them. But there was no concern (except in medicine and occasionally elsewhere) to discover and formulate empirical knowledge in such a way that future facts can be predicted and controlled for human ends.

This consideration has however become primary for modern science. Its empiricism does not merely insist on adequate factual evidence ; the perceived facts must be organized in a network of temporal relations so conceived that thinkers can foresee the future consequences of what is happening now and can make them serve desirable ends wherever the conditions needed are within their power. In short, a basic presupposition of modern science is that true knowledge of nature is predictive knowledge—that the pervasive order which needs to be uncovered is an order permitting accurate prediction and increasing control on the part of man as he interacts with his environment. This presupposition has been briefly described in the preceding chapter. In contrast with ancient science, the comprehensive systems and unifying theories developed by a modern scientist bind together bits of truth each of which is an instance of predictive knowledge.

The quest for predictive knowledge has a long history. Its earliest form was probably that which would now be called "prognostication". Primitive seers believed it possible to foresee the outcome of important events by examining a flight of birds, or a tortoise shell, or the patterned order in the entrails of a sacrificed animal. Modern science has abandoned such methods as unreliable.

A discussion of this conviction about knowledge finds it natural to speak both of "prediction" and of "prophecy". When a thinker anticipates a future event by imaginatively extending a sequence of events that have been and promise to be exactly repeated, the term "prediction" is appropriate. When he anticipates a significant outcome in a region where such definiteness and assurance are unattainable, "prophecy" is the proper term to use.

An intriguing idea readily arises. Might it be that man's entire pursuit of knowledge can be fruitfully organized around the quest for successful prediction or prophecy ?

At first sight there seem to be areas in which this idea would be false. Consider mathematics again. I presume that most mathematicians have no such aim, except that they may conjecture possible future applications of this or that mathematical discovery, or possible solutions of a problem yet unsolved. Consider the archeologist and the historian. Their purpose is not to prophesy the future but to reveal what has transpired in the past. However, a collateral role for predictive anticipation may be indispensable in these areas, and it calls our attention to the ultimate ground in experience of the predictive relation. Few such

investigators are satisfied with merely recording detailed facts ; they devise more or less comprehensive explanatory theories. Now a major test of a proposed theory is this : Does it enable an investigator to anticipate facts previously unnoticed but which further investigation then uncovers ? If it does, it is so far verified. Archeological and historical theories, like others, are subject to this test. An essential role in the progress of knowledge is thus filled by the successful prediction of verifying facts.

Such situations show that the temporal relation between prediction and verification is not the causal relation as such but the relation between some thinker's act of predicting and a later verifying act of experiment or observation.*

A striking confirmation of the Newtonian theory of the solar system is a well known example of this predictive relation. The planet Neptune was discovered because its existence and location were predicted when irregularities in the motion of Uranus were calculated in the light of that theory.

An interesting support for the idea that knowledge is essentially predictive appears in an instructive development in the history of modern science. During the early centuries of that history it was taken for granted by almost all thinkers that, in order to predict the future, events must be placed in a causal sequence—a scientist is always predicting as his anticipated outcome the definite effect of a definite cause. But during the last century scientists have been dealing more and more with events where this is not possible. In such cases all that can be said is that, given a certain set of conditions, a certain outcome is probable, and the degree of probability can be specified—*e.g.*, the predicted outcome will occur over the long run in seven cases out of ten. In this situation the empirical laws discoverable do not conform to the requirements of strict causality, but scientists are not deterred or discouraged by that fact. Why ?

The answer seems to be that what they are most concerned about is not any traditional explanatory framework ; as long as the laws discovered make some successful prediction possible, that is enough for their needs. This is possible with laws of probability, as became evident when Mendel demonstrated the biological laws of inheritance.** The value of predictability was strong enough to override the hoary presupposition that only

* This is so fundamental that science is often defined today in terms of this relation. See for example Rubin Gotesky's definition of "scientific research" in the *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 17, No 1, September/October, 1973, p. 101.

** See J. Bronowski, *The Common Sense of Science*, Cambridge, Harvard, University Press, 1953, Chapter VI.

a definite causal relation provides an adequate explanation of any event. This radical shift in the attitude toward predictability is taken for granted by leaders of business enterprises when making predictions to guide their decisions about producing or advertising a commodity. Very rarely if ever do they assume that the effect of a given change in their program can be exactly forecast ; any decision has to be based on an estimate of probability. The notion of a precise causal law is in this situation completely left aside.

So it seems that a pervasive concern for predictive or prophetic knowledge is always present, and that there is sound reason for it to continue to guide our truth-seeking activities in whatever way it can. Heinrich Hertz, famous discoverer of electromagnetic rays, has said of this concern : "The most important problem which our conscious knowledge of nature should enable us to solve is the anticipation of future events, so that we may arrange our present affairs in accordance with such anticipation."* Other scientists explicitly or tacitly echo that statement. Should anyone still be doubtful about the tremendous importance of predictive knowledge, let him consider how crucial planning for the future is in his experience, and how uncertain even the best laid plans may prove to be. We have to anticipate as best we can in making any plan, and we have to realize the fallibility of any anticipation.

The paramount superiority and usefulness of predictive knowledge is now evident to all civilized men. They see that when applied to our technological progress it is an indispensable means to a vaster and more varied good for humanity than would otherwise ever be attained. It can guide action as reliably as possible so as to realize whatever goods are at any time attainable. Knowledge that is not predictive is useless in that regard. Modern science not only wins this kind of knowledge, but is concerned to make it as reliable and accurate as it might become.

4

But science has also been filling another function that is equally if not more important. It not only provides a model of the predictive understanding man can win, but also a model of the free democratic community he can build. Sadly, this function is not yet generally recognized. By filling it science is contributing toward a larger and stabler unity of mankind than has yet been achieved.

* Quoted by Loren Eiseley, *The Unexpected Universe*, New York, 1961 (Harcourt, Brace and World), p. 41.

Insight into this second function can best be sought by turning to what might look like an irrelevant social inquiry. When a community of scientists is formed, bound together by the bonds that naturally arise from their scientific work, what sort of community does it become? How would the main virtues that give it cohesion as a human society be wisely portrayed? Scientists show all the frailties and foibles that other people show, except in the relations with their colleagues that are necessary for scientific progress. J. Bronowski gives enlightening guidance at this point.

He finds that those relations are the ones that make for survival in any human society and for its growth toward a world community. His fundamental conclusion is :

"As a set of discoveries and devices, science has mastered nature ; but it has been able to do so only because its values, which derive from its method, have formed those who practise it into a living, stable, and incorruptible society. Here is a community where everyone has been free to enter, to speak his mind, and to be heard and contradicted."*

What are those uniquely important values ?

They boil down to a virtue firmly rooted in the essential relation between scientists, namely respect for one another as they seek the truth that is won through respect for fact. Now the necessity of respect for fact is obvious to anyone concerned with the expansion of reliable knowledge. But why is respect for one another essential? Because scientific investigators agree on two basic assumptions : (1) no truth as now formulated should be regarded as final, for it is likely to be more or less transformed when it finds its place in the fuller truth that lies ahead ; and (2) progress toward that fuller truth will be made if thinkers freely explore relevant facts further and collaborate with each other in the exploration. Such progress thus requires mutual respect in an atmosphere of unfettered freedom. An outstanding historical landmark in this cooperative progress is the founding in 1662 of the "Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge." An avowed aim of that organization was "to promote scientific discussion"—discussion about scientists' activities and plans for research, each member being ready to learn from his fellows. Four years later the similar "Academic Royale des Sciences" was

* See his *Science and Human Values*, New York, 1965, Harper and Row (Torchbooks), Chapter III and especially pp. 57-71.

founded in Paris. Any society that thus carries out its aim transcends all national, racial, religious, and economic differences ; it is intrinsically a universal community.

To describe more fully the setting in which scientific work goes on : Since man does not exist or pursue knowledge in isolation but as a social being, he needs knowledge of the way things behave that is capable of being shared with his fellows. It must take a form that can be actually shared with other thinkers in the limited society to which he belongs, and it should be potentially sharable—especially in an age when all societies throughout the world interact more and more closely—with truth-seekers everywhere. Unlimited sharability is essential to genuine knowledge.

Now all concerned with the progress of science presuppose that the knowledge it gains is "objective." What then is "objectivity ?" This word is sometimes defined in terms of the relation of knowledge to some external reality. But we have seen when reflecting earlier on relativity that this is an error. It does involve the reliability of knowledge, and if we clarify it in terms of the actual procedure of a scientist as he fills his role, it seems likewise to involve sharability as just described. The significant relation for knowledge is not between an idea in the mind and an external object ; it is between the character an object may show to some individual or group at a limited time or place and the character it shows to the whole body of truthseekers in the most inclusive setting attainable. When a scientist tries to find out what a puzzling object really is he does not turn to some non-experienced realm ; he learns what it is experienced as when undistorted by individual and cultural vagaries. Elwood assumes this relation in defining objectivity as "such a description of the processes investigated that the description can be verified by any scientific investigator".* What cannot be thus verified is subjective, and is likely also to be unreliable.

If this outcome is justified, objectivity is not an obscure metaphysical entity but a moral and social ideal. It is progressively attained as thinkers grow in their perception and interpretation of objects from being guided by an unreliable and parochial orientation toward guidance by a more reliable and universal one. What the scientist seeks is a description of objects or explanation of events on which all thinkers who appreciate the nature of his quest can freely agree. Scientists acknowledge this in the maxim practically universal among them, that the truth about anything is what can be publicly confirmed about it.

* C. A. Elwood, *Methods in Sociology*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1933, p. 29.

That the agreement thus attainable is attained freely, without any compulsion, can hardly be overstressed. A scientist is likely to feel as his fellow citizens do about the necessity of coercive force in law enforcement and in military defense. But he knows that when scientific truth is concerned, coercion is out of place and futile. Truth spreads from one thinker to others only by free persuasion and collaboration.

Bronowski's further and especially challenging conclusion is that the virtue of this free collaboration in the pursuit of knowledge is not limited to the society of scientists. It is also the vital virtue exemplified by the progress of people in general toward a democratic community. Such a community is based on an openminded and unhampered search for truth—*i.e.*, it is essentially an association of persons who prize truth and respect the right of everyone to pursue it freely in his own way provided that he allows others the same right. It is important that this feature of a democratic community be fully realized. At present it is not widely realized. Ponder a couple of specific features that would be evident in such an association. Just as an individual scientist who questions current theories is not condemned as a subversive dissenter by his colleagues, so any member of a democratic community who questions current beliefs will not—at least, in ideal—be condemned by his fellow citizens. Just as other scientists take the new proposals of such a questioner seriously, some being ready to cooperate in bringing out clearly whatever is sound in them, so other members of a truly democratic community will be open to the wider experience in which the contribution of any person toward progress can win its rightful place. The world community that we envision must be a democratic brotherhood if it is to endure, and such a brotherhood is the essence of a scientific society in the limited arena of man's quest for objective knowledge.

What is inescapably crucial in any human situation is thus not the "facts", but how the facts are seen by the persons involved in dealing with them—whether citizens, judges, diplomats, or scientists.

5

When one surveys the history of presuppositions about what an acceptable scientific explanation should be like, I believe that the conclusion just reached stands out vividly. Consider some bits of evidence for the hypothesis that the evolution of science is a process through which less trustworthy and less widely shared ideas about the world are

step by step replaced by more trustworthy and more universal ones. The intrinsic socio-moral role of science loom as an impressive feature in that evolution. The lesson thus taught is important.

First, a civilized outlook on the environing world does not suddenly appear full-blown. Only gradually does it take form. So one would naturally expect that, even after a dependably objective view has gained a firm foothold in man's description of certain facts, time would still be needed to extend his objective vista to other areas. That this is the case is confirmed by many illustrations from scientific history. Look at an illustration from the physical sciences. History reveals a strong propensity to apply their successful method at first merely to objects close at hand—objects that can be touched and handled as well as seen. It is taken for granted at that time that objects distant in space and time—celestial bodies, for example,—must be understood in terms of a cosmic ideology resting on quite different presuppositions. But such presuppositions vary greatly from one civilized people to another ; they are revealed in diverse myths and legends. Hence the trend toward a shared explanation requires that thinkers increasingly interpret distant facts as similar to the facts near at hand, whose reliable interpretation is achieved by different peoples in much the same way. They want to use the knowledge gained for the same purposes. Primitive man projected his capricious emotions even on regions near at hand, as his view of objects in them shows ; it is not surprising that civilized man continued for a time to do this in his ideas about more distant regions.

Glance at a couple of well known examples. Ancient astronomy assumed that bodies in the celestial region and the laws of their motion differ markedly from those observable on the earth ; the astronomy of Newton and his successors assume that they are similar. Modern geological and biological theories, when compared with ancient ideas in those fields, reflect the same change ; they take it for granted that evolution in the remote past exemplified laws that can be confirmed by observation of what is happening now, instead of being derived from the account in the Book of Genesis, as was long thought proper. In short, the quest for sharable knowledge gradually leads thinkers to view the whole spatial and temporal panorama in the way required by impartial study of the small segment near at hand. Thus knowledge of a larger area becomes sharable as the virtues of such study become more widely realized. Progress is being made toward a uniform way of perceiving and explaining the world.

Turn to a second bit of evidence, which stands out impressively when one surveys the role of active experiment in the history of science.

Today the vital importance of experiment is everywhere taken for granted. But the ancient and mediaeval predecessors of contemporary science, with few and uninfluential exceptions, did not regard it as important. The primitive magician experimented, in the sense that he tried out various techniques for inducing the powers in nature to act as he wanted them to but when, through a more adequate view of the world those powers lost their reality, that kind of experimentation was abandoned. As for Greek and Roman scientists, almost all were content (when investigating empirical facts) with the method of careful observation. And in the writings of prominent pioneers of modern science—Galileo, Descartes, Newton—one finds statements to the effect that they engaged in verifying experiments, not to convince themselves but to convince other thinkers that their conclusions were correct. To those acquainted with Descartes no quotation from him is needed.* In the case of Galileo, J. J. Fahie quotes him as having written that "ignorance had been the best teacher he ever had, since in order to be able to demonstrate to his opponents the truth of his conclusions he had been forced to prove them by a variety of experiments, although to satisfy his own mind alone he had never felt it necessary to make any".** In the case of Newton, the following statement appears in the Portsmouth Collection of his papers: "He said that he first proved his inventions by geometry, and only made use of experiments to make them intelligible and to convince the vulgar."***

The minds of these great scientists were satisfied—so it would appear—by demonstrating their conclusions from certain axioms about the universe of which they were quite confident. However, they had come to realize that an experiment open to observation by anyone is needed if other people, even including their fellow thinkers, are to be persuaded. An individual scientist, like other men, is tempted to draw conclusions on the basis of his private cosmology. He has a world-view into which everything important seems to fit; any data that do not fit he can usually neglect. But other thinkers will have their own world-view in which not

* But see my *Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1932, p. 108 f.

** See Charles Singer, *Studies In the History and Method of Science*, Oxford, 1921, Vol. II, p. 251.

*** See Louis T. Moore, *Isaac Newton, a Biography*, New York, Scribner's, 1934, p. 610.

all of his facts will be given the place he accords them. Hence, as LaPlace remarked, were this difficulty to remain unresolved, "a scientific society would soon come to grief through the clash of dogmatic views.... The desire to convince others leads to a mutual agreement not to assume anything beyond the results of observation and calculation."* Every scientist prizes his standing in that society, so a decisive need is felt by all for a method capable of reaching results that can be publicly verified and are thus objective. All investigators had come to assume that a scientific conclusion, to be soundly established, must be demonstrable to any competent thinker. Hence experiment was necessary. When inquirers face empirical facts, experiment is the form of demonstration that can convince every open mind. When it reaches a clear conclusion, uncoerced agreement is won.

It is hard today to realize how radical a step it was to accept a fundamental place for experiment in the pursuit of truth. A few Greek inquirers performed experiments, but with many, such activities were disdained as beneath the dignity of an intelligent thinker. Some philosophers even regarded them as impious—an experimenter is assuming that he can play the part which belongs only to God.** Modern scientists however in their search for objective truth, guided by the ideal of agreement voluntarily achieved in the presence of the relevant facts, found experiment indispensable. Its distinctive importance is especially revealed in any province of science where much disagreement still obtains. This is the situation in the sciences dealing with man and his varied activities. Investigators are increasingly concerned to find modes of controlled experiment that throw light on major aspects of human nature that are obscure and have been explained in different ways.

The revision of existing knowledge called for by a verifying experiment is usually of minor importance; no reform of any general scientific theory is required. But sometimes the outcome departs so radically from what had been expected that the problem is satisfactorily

* I have been unable to locate the original source of this quotation.

** "There will be no difficulty in seeing how and by what mixtures the colors derived from these are made according to the rules of probability. He, however, who should attempt to verify all this by experiment, would forget the difference of the human and divine nature. For God only has the knowledge and the power which are able to combine many things into one and again to resolve the one into many. No man is or ever will be able to accomplish either the one or the other operation." See Plato's *Timaeus*, 68 (Jowett trans.)

solved only by revising an apparently fundamental theory. The outstanding instance of this situation during the last century is the series of experiments on the velocity of light by Michelson and Morley in 1889. They led to a revised theory of the basic concepts in the science of physics, including motion, mass, time, and space. The history of science includes the periodic transforming of its presuppositions as well as less radical modes of progress.

CHAPTER VI

Religion As A Major Guide On The Journey

Religion As A Major Guide On The Journey

The word "religion" refers to a pervasive, powerful, and persistent force in human life. But it is haunted with serious difficulties, arising largely from people's varied acquaintance with that force. It may be associated in their experience with wise insight, benevolence, comforting security, and hope, or it may reverberate with echoes of unwelcome authority, primitive superstition, even aggressive exploitation. And the nuances between these extremes are many. Would that such an ambiguous word could be avoided ! But one who seeks to understand man can hardly get along without it.

Religious movements are sprouting everywhere today and often do not appear religious because they fail to fit into what the word has meant in the past. Fortunately, the spiritual pioneers of history are recognized by practically everyone as great religious leaders, so their example gives a core of dependable meaning to the word. Those leaders have taught the fundamental lesson that at bottom religion is not a set of doctrines but a way to fuller life in man's relation to the whole encompassing universe. The doctrines are an attempted interpretation of that way and the fuller life is sought in the framework of ideas prevailing in the social arena of a pioneer at the time he and his theological interpreters fill their role. Any such framework has to be revised or replaced after a while and some changes—*e.g.*, from primitive cults to the ancient imperial religion of Egypt and Babylonia, and then to the living civilized faiths—are very radical. Those faiths too have not remained the same throughout their evolution, so this capacity for growth is quite fundamental to religion.

1

Most species of life may have reached the limit of their capacity for growth ; but man appears capable of infinite growth. When one adopts

a long run perspective and realizes that all reality as man perceives it reflects the values dominating his active interaction with it he becomes open to perceive unlimited possibilities. In this openness he can envision his own evolving selfhood, and can sense an infinite greatness and goodness in whose presence reverence is the appropriate feeling. That which he reverences is the being traditionally called "God".

How can we best describe God ?

Traditional ways of doing this in theology and metaphysics are today more perplexing than clarifying to thinking men and women, except for one idea that is still significant and promising. This is the idea of "holiness", which can happily be replaced by the more acceptable word "wholeness" ; both come from the same root. Let us remember the great two-fold commandment of later Judaism and early Christianity, which can be rendered in the form : Love God with your whole soul, your whole heart, your whole mind, and your whole strength, and love your neighbor's wholeness as your own.

But this description of God through the idea of wholeness is not self-explanatory. Its spiritual meaning begins to take form when one ceases to view it as an abstract concept and looks at his aspiring experience as a progressive realization of wholeness. Wholeness then becomes the solution of a deep and persistent problem challenging all persons at all times—the problem of overcoming inner conflict and gaining the strength to meet with sensitivity and hope whatever happens. Expressed in religious language, this is the problem of realizing union with God.

History strongly suggests that God first appeared as wholeness to keen seers when they began to reject polytheism and to realize His unqualified unity. That unity can be envisioned in several ways, but to one seeking spiritual growth only unity as wholeness seems to be fully acceptable.

Wholeness is a moral ideal—never experienced in perfect form, but capable of guiding growth toward whatever measure of perfection proves attainable. Here the intrinsic bond between morality and spiritual religion emerges clearly. To seek wholeness is to seek true personal fulfillment and fulfillment for all men and women in a loving community. Thus the evolution of civilized religion over the centuries became a progressive moral renovation.

Even in primitive religion there is a tendency to idealize the divinities that are recognized ; first, the powers which on the whole act beneficently were separated in men's minds from the evil demons, and then were more and more portrayed as superior to other natural powers. In the quest for civilization this tendency became more obvious. It is evident at the very birth of the great religions in their insistence that goodness involves a sense of moral responsibility toward all men.

Every adherent of these religions is acquainted with the ideal of integrity shown by those in each generation who have caught the spirit of the pioneers. That ideal reveals a new meaning in the phrase "self-preservation". To a person who responds with his whole soul to the example of the pioneers, self-preservation is the preservation of his moral integrity, which requires that he stand against the social forces around him whenever failure to do so would mean surrendering that integrity. Robert Walpole is reported to have said : "All men have their price." The life of those who have caught the spirit of the pioneers says instead : "No true man can be brought." Their heartfelt union with each other and with the Encompassing Divine Presence frees them from fear, despair, and loneliness. Such men and women arise in every generation, and their influence gradually spreads because most of them do not withdraw from society (except briefly for the sake of their inner renewal) but embark on the active transformation of human life in whatever way their special talents make possible. As President Radhakrishnan has said, "The free spirits are the rays of light that shine from the future, attracting all of us who still dwell in darkness. They do not separate themselves from the world, but accept the responsibility for perfecting all life."* Filling that sublime role, they become models of healthy humanity—advance scouts for the human race as it evolves.

All of them exemplify the truth that love is exuberant vitality and hence that there is such a thing as loving aggression.* Much aggression is unloving, and this is the case with a good deal of the interference with the lives of others which parades as an expression of love. Nonetheless one who truly loves longs to share whatever truth he has glimpsed, and to bring light wherever there is darkness. So our spiritual pioneers did not withhold their "good news" from others. Of course they knew that any unwelcome intrusiveness must be avoided. So they mastered the difficult art of combining full respect for every person with eagerness to

* The root meaning of "aggression" is simply : "Going toward". It can be done with open arms as well as with a menacing weapon.

communicate the vision they had found precious and believed would be precious to their fellows. Through their example it is clear that to be aggressive in this way is just to make other persons and their growing experience a part of one's own growing selfhood.

How does the influence of the pioneers gradually penetrate and transform other phases of a civilized culture ?

A spiritual pioneer is a charismatic person who combines power to exert an emotional appeal with a message that speaks to deep human needs. He sows seeds of spiritual vitality in the hearts of those around him ; some of those seeds take root and in due time bear fruit. Thus he wins a group of disciples who so far as their limitations permit become like him, and they in turn win followers who form an expanding community. In each subsequent generation of that community pious fathers and warmhearted mothers appear ; among their sons or daughters there is likely to be a dynamic leader, responsive to human needs and retaining a live sense of Divine guidance. Among his or her offspring, and preserving some measure of spiritual sensitivity, the world can expect a perceptive philosopher, a social-minded scientist, an inspiring artist, or a conscientious statesman. Their example and teaching gradually reshape the institutions of their society. In time another sower of spiritual seeds will appear and a similar cycle will begin. Thus these pioneers awake to creative action progressive leaders in all areas of civilized life. They are the prime source of the enduring reconstructions that from time to time occur.

Especially important are the intellectual reconstructions that appear in the history of theology and religious philosophy. Since men have minds as well as feelings, and are eager to understand whatever can be understood, a vigorous concern appears from time to time to interpret the major insights won by the civilized faiths so that they can be intelligently related to everything else in thought and experience. At its best such an interpretation brings a larger and clearer understanding of each spiritual vision in its full human setting. This concern found expression in Buddhism just before and after the beginning of the Christian era ; its most prominent achievement took form in the Mahayana philosophies that will be mentioned later in this chapter. In subsequent religious history the most striking period of this kind is the four hundred years after 900 A.D. ; the movement culminated in a brilliant manifestation of philosophico-theological power in the last two centuries of that period, evident in all main regions of the civilized world. In China that new philosophical interpretation is most prominent in Neo-Confucianism, whose outstanding

representative was Chu Hsi (1130-1200). In Europe it is most vividly revealed in Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), who revised the Christian cosmic orientation on the foundation provided by Aristotelian philosophy. In India several philosophers were revising at that time, but the greatest representative of this development is Sankara, who came a few centuries earlier.

2

Surveying the civilized religions in a broad perspective, let us trace in fuller detail the significant evolution in their central conception of the divine.

Pre-civilized religions often show awareness that there is a Great Spirit superior to other divinities, but the objects of worship are usually the inscrutable powers of nature, renowned ancestral heroes, and the sources of generation in living things. When the divine was seen in men they were similar to those powers—*i.e.*, the wielders of authority such as a tribal chief or of magical potency as a skillful shaman. This was natural in people's image of God when sheer might was what they respected most; "Almighty" is the primary adjective traditionally applied to Him in the Western faiths. That image of the divine continued as civilization evolved; emperors, kings, high pontiffs, and other possessors of worldly might were often deified.

In the ancient empires of the Near East a different note appeared, especially in the way their seers located the divine in space. For them Heaven was the supreme deity, before whose majesty the earthly godlings either faded away or were relegated to a subordinate place in the pantheon. The emperor, who was regarded as the mundane representative of Heaven and was often identified with it, could by that status unify and centralize the divine powers in the experience of his subjects. The step toward a higher moral orientation in this imperial religion appears in the fact that Heaven is impartial—it bestows light and warmth on all beings who are dependent on it. The emperor also was clothed with majesty and his subjects trembled before his might, but on occasion he too could be impartial, seeing that justice was done to a weak and humble man who had been mistreated by some arrogant administrator.

The next great step came with the civilized religions that have continued as living forces to our own day. It took vivid form in what theology has known as the doctrine of incarnation. What is profoundly significant in the conviction that Jesus and the Buddha are incarnations

of the divine is the ethical humanism thus expressed. Here men are deified who wield no worldly power but exemplify the noble characteristics of man at his best. What is essential in the nature of God—so this conviction implicitly teaches—is human goodness as revealed in a revered person, not the force exhibited in the physical universe or a ruthless dictator but a quite different power in the aspiring spirit of man.

One more significant step has appeared, but its main development remains for the future. Its essence is clearly expressed today in the central Quaker conviction that there is "that of God in every man or woman." Manhood and womanhood as such for this conviction are divine, even though an undiscouraged faith in their moral capacity is often needed in order to maintain that conviction. God can be seen in a smiling human face, and also in one whose smile is waiting to be drawn out. As I have ventured a prophecy about the future evolution of science, I now venture one about the evolution of civilized religion: The conviction that there is divinity in all persons, to be respected and honored as such, will grow stronger and spread more widely until it is taken for granted by every religious thinker. For such a conviction, the mystery of the Divine is mainly the mystery inherent in humanity, which is being unveiled step by step as man's inexhaustible possibilities are envisioned and his creative talents fulfilled.

Many insights in the past evolution of religion are readily seen to express this conviction when interpreted in its light. The Chinese religions taught that the *Tao* of Heaven and the *tao* of man are in their basic character the same. A prominent faith in Mahayana Buddhism is that every person can become a Buddha. Hindus have through the centuries believed that the Divine Brahman and the soul of each individual, however humble, are one. In expounding Hinduism at the 1892 Parliament of Religions in Chicago Swami Vivekananda said that "if a religion is to become universal . . . it must recognize divinity in every man and woman, and its whole force will be centered on aiding humanity to realize its true divine nature."* Rabindranath Tagore vividly expressed the implication of this belief as a guide to worship when he said in Stanza X of his *Gitanjali* :

"Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads I
Whom does thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a
temple with all doors shut? Open thine eyes and see,
thy God is not before thee."

* See also his lecture at Pasadena in 1900 on "The Way to the Realization of Universal Religion." (Complete Works, Fifth Edition, Vol. II, p. 372).

"He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard
ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones.
He is with them in sun and shower, and his garment
is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and
like him come down on the dusty soil!"

As a permanent consequence of this historical trend, the vision of the Divine in civilized religion draws indissolubly together the greatness that can be glimpsed in the infinite universe and the potential greatness of man. Seeing divinity in every man and woman, it is a democratic vision, supporting all the forces that are working toward democracy in our social institutions. In this setting it becomes very plausible that the great leader is great because by his creative insight he anticipates what all of his fellows will come in time to appreciate as an ultimate value.

The soul stirring task we now face is to discern the special gift that each major civilized faith has brought to man's search for fullness of life. A more humbling task can hardly be imagined, for even partial success is attainable only through reverent responsiveness to the life-enhancing power of spiritual genius wherever it has appeared. What is essential is an understanding fully open to all faiths and also penetrating to the heart of each. That achievement is arduous indeed, but it is possible. A seeker for such understanding should become sufficiently acquainted with the results of historical scholarship in the study of religion so that his insight does not conflict with them. Otherwise, his interpretation of this or that faith will lose its capacity to illuminate when scholarly research has penetrated farther. But one who is master of detail without being alertly responsive to the unique experience of the founder is in a more serious plight. He is like a physiologist who knows all the details about veins and arteries but has no sound understanding of the heart in its relation to those details.

The part I shall try to play in meeting the challenge is to offer a few samples of how this most difficult task might be performed, remembering that I am just one seeker for the enlightenment that can thus be gained and that my interpretation will inevitably reflect my limitations. My samples will naturally include Christianity since I grew up in it, and three religions of the Far East will be included—Taoism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. In interpreting them my aim is to detect as clearly as I can the answer of each to the questions: Where in our experience does one find the key to a solution of the ultimate problem of life? What is the heart of a successful solution?

Is this too ambitious an aim ? Yes—but will any less ambitious quest do ? I trust that others will be moved to undertake it, and that some will carry out a similar task with Confucianism and Islam, which are just as important as the four I am including.

3

Taoism is a religion whose history presents a very complex picture. But it has brought a precious gift to the world.* One who penetrates to its heart will find himself rewarded with a farsighted understanding of people and the universe they live in—an understanding that reveals vistas somewhat different than those emphasized by the other religions and interprets them in its special way. Our search for its heart may well begin with a clear understanding of the concept of *Tao* as referring to that which is ultimate in our experience. It means "way" or "path" ; this indicates that what is most important for Taoism is not a set of doctrines but a dependable way on which to travel from wherever one now is toward true fulfillment.

At the heart of Taoism is the poignant awareness that in his pursuit of civilized values man has lost the knack of living wisely ; he is not finding true and lasting fulfillment. Its central message is : "Free yourself from the unnatural competitiveness and anxiety which so easily imprison men, and realize the enduring harmony that can thus be realized within one's self, with all one's fellows, and with the whole of nature." Varied interpretations of the message and divergent emphases are possible, each of which can add its illumination.

Its view of man's basic plight is that he lets himself be caught in a compulsive struggle for prestige, honor, wealth, and power. In this struggle he is haunted by worry and fear ; he trusts his urge to control other people and his rational intellect to bring him success. But that whole orientation is a mistake. To pursue the route it entices him into is to miss the *Tao* (that is, the "way") rather than to find it. It may, to be sure, lead to a transitory success, but the higher one climbs by this route the more precarious his position and the more certain and disastrous his fall.

* I make use here of the interpretation of Taoism in my *Man Seeks the Divine*, Chapter VI. New York, 1970, Harper and Row, Colophon Books, No. 177.

When one sees these truths, the fundamental lesson is that he must renounce this delusive struggle, giving up the notion that anything is accomplished by hectic rivalry with others for these supposed values, and turning toward a different goal that can bring true happiness. And this practical lesson at once involves a theoretical one. What he has thought to be strength is not real strength—likewise with knowledge, virtue, and even action. The way he has been using all these words is prescribed by current usage, but that usage is mistaken.

What, then, to do ?

"Oftentimes one strips oneself of passion
In order to see the Secret of Life."

Or, more fully,

"Curtall thy desires,
Check thy selfishness,
Embrace the true Nature,
Reveal thy Simple Self."*

In brief, understand and conquer yourself. Realize that your self-centered passions are the source of your foolish behavior and perverted ideas. Lay them aside. Stop trying to control other people. Let them become themselves ; and in doing so you will become your true self. Accept all things in the universe, not just those that your undisciplined ambitions lead you to notice and clutch at. Open yourself to everything in its own natural pattern instead of projecting on it the pattern reflecting your hopes and loves, hates and fears. Then you will detect the clues to the true nature of *tao* that experience discloses.

Here, for example, is the familiar substance, water.

"The best of men (are) like water ;
Water benefits all things
And does not compete with them.
It dwells in (the lowly) places that all disdain ;
Wherein it comes near to the Tao."**

Water does not compete for high position, but is quite content to settle in the hollows that other things struggle to avoid ; in this one can see the nature of the *tao*. Or, looking out upon objects in the large, consider the universe as a whole.

* Chapter I and XIX of the *Tao Teh Ching* of Lao Tse, reversing the order of the lines in XIX. In these and the following quotations I am using Lin Yu-tang's translation in the Modern Library (New York, Random House, 1948).

** Chapter VIII.

"The universe is everlasting.
The reason the universe is everlasting
is that it does not live for itself.
Hence it can long endure.

"Therefore the sage puts himself last,
And finds himself in the foremost place ;
Regards his body as accidental,
And his body is thus preserved.
Is it not because he does not live for self
That his self achieves perfection ?"*

The universe, too, exemplifies the *tao* because instead of seeking success for itself it bestows life on all things through the unceasing activity going on within it. When one is open to such lessons he can imitate the universe in this respect. Then he discovers that, by following this "way," the kind of selfhood that he really wants is gained.

Let us draw these insights together : when a person truly understands the *tao* in the light of such revealing clues and begins to follow it, he finds that instead of becoming weak, crushed, empty (as might be expected) he realizes a new strength and a growing wholeness. He gains a knowledge that is the only reliable knowledge, a freedom and happiness that alone are truly such. By "non-action"—*i.e.*, by abandoning the competitive self-assertion that alone looks like effective action to others—he learns that the way of true achievement is the way of sensitivity to one's fellows, the way of modest yielding, of patience and non-violence, of tolerance and impartiality. For "gentleness overcomes strength ; love is victorious in attack, and invulnerable in defense."** By thus discerning and following the *tao* one wins a dependably rewarding relation to the universe and everything in it. A summarizing portrayal of the nature of *tao* is given in Chapter XXIV of the *Tao Teh Ching*.

"The great *Tao* flows everywhere,
(Like a flood) It may go left or right ;
The myriad things derive their life from it,
And it does not deny them.
When its work is accomplished,
It does not take possession.
It clothes and feeds the myriad things,
Yet does not claim them as its own.
Often (viewed) as without mind or passion,
It may be considered small ;

* Chapter VII.

** Chapters XXXVI, LXVII.

Being the home of all things, yet claiming not,
It may be considered great.
Because to the end it does not claim greatness,
Its greatness is achieved."

How now is this moral vision related to the cosmic setting in which human life ever evolves ?

The ultimate reality in the universe is the *Tao* in its transcendent nature—as one, changeless, and eternal. Out of this hidden source emerge from time to time the "myriad things" that constitute the variegated detail of the world as human beings experience it.

The primary law according to which the universe operates is quite simple. The "myriad things" arise out of the *tao* ; many of them aggressively assert themselves in their separateness, trying to maintain and expand their status at each other's expense. This is how the primary problem of life arises, since men, like other creatures, assert themselves in this fashion ; each tries to preserve his separate status—nay, even to win a high and superior position at the cost of forcing others into inferiority. But although an apparent success may be achieved in this bizarre endeavor the struggle is futile, and the futility is unfailingly revealed in the end. In due time all lose their separate existence and are merged in the ultimate source from which they came. This is the process that endlessly goes on in the cosmic economy.

To man, however, belongs a distinctive privilege in comparison with his fellow creatures. He can understand the universal process and accept his place in it ; thus he may consciously guide his return to the *tao*. He can renounce the self-seeking passions that are so deceptive ; he can discover and follow the basic harmony of the universe ; in secure adjustment to reality he can win light, love, peace, and immortality.

Immortality ? Yes. But how does a Taoist achieve it ? I will offer a suggestion. There is a radical difference between returning to the *tao* in the fashion exemplified by the sage who has learned these lessons and the inevitable return that is the destiny of others. The latter perish ; the separate existence they had struggled so hard to preserve comes to an end. They are lost in the *tao*. But the sage, through wise acceptance of the *tao* and purposive identification with it, realizes a living union with that which is intrinsically everlasting, and through this realized union he is immortal. When, like the *tao*, a person gives himself freely, he no longer has any separate existence which he is trying to maintain against other

forms existence. He has freed himself from the blind self-centeredness that perishes ; he has discovered that "to yield is to be preserved whole."*

4

From Taoism we turn to Buddhism. What is its distinctive gift to man's evolving growth and understanding ?

The greatest gift may well be the radiant personality of the Buddha himself. But besides that beneficent gift there is a unique vision of the spiritual life and its goal, as well as a unique conception of the basic human problem which must be and can be successfully solved. When I try to articulate this problem and vision, four major features take form. All of them reflect the Buddha's intensely practical thoroughly humane concern.

The first reveals the important fact that the Buddha was one of the intellectual giants of history as well as a spiritual pioneer. It is natural then that Buddhism is the only one of the great religions that is obviously grounded in and guided by a rational analysis of the challenge life poses. But it was a warmhearted analysis too. What this truth implied to the Buddha is shown by his compassionate realization that in India at that time religion was failing to meet the fundamental needs of people. Temple worship had become mired in the priestly ritualism of tradition, and the hermit saints were retiring to the forests where many remained aloof from ordinary social life. Whatever a religion is or does, he was convinced that it must meet the basic yearnings of men and women everywhere. It must take as indubitably real their daily experience, as perceived by a person eager to win sympathetic understanding of what it reveals. He was a psychotherapist as well as a prophet.

His central question seems to have been : What is the primary and inescapable need of people—of all people at all times and places ? To put the question in more specific form : what is the plight in which everyone is caught simply by being alive in a world of continuous change ? And how can the right answer be stated in a way that frees it from the confines of any cultural background or inherited framework of thought ?

* Chapter XXII. Many later Taoists adopted a simple physical conception of immortality.

Now a universal fact of human experience is that the world does not gratify our natural longings but is sure to bring frustration, disappointment, grief, and woe. Of course life has its happy moments. Nonetheless, it is inherently painful ; illness, old age, and death haunt it. Hence all men and women are seeking a way out of the confused mixture of suffering and transitory happiness in which they are entangled. When the problem is faced in these terms, one can perceive the essence of a sound solution ; it will show each person how to rise permanently above pain and grief so that life becomes a real fulfillment instead of an experience poisoned by unhappiness.

The second major feature also reveals this rational orientation. The Buddha was sure that the basic problem is not solved by seeking supernatural help. Men can win a genuine solution only by bringing to bear on their plight the resources of intelligence, for the problem is essentially a practical one and intelligence is the faculty with which any such problem is most reliably met. So, alone among the great religions, Buddhism is frankly based on a keen systematic probing of this inescapable predicament. In the "Four Noble Truths" its founder locates the inherently painful aspect of man's experience ; he identifies the general cause of that aspect ; he declares that thereby the pain can be overcome ; and he teaches the sequence of steps needed to overcome it. In articulating these truths, the Buddha shows people how to use their faculty of intelligence to perceive the ubiquitous presence of *dukkha* (usually translated by "pain" or "suffering"), and then to realize the conditions under which genuine wellbeing—that is, the opposite of *dukkha*—can be won. Moreover, he describes clearly the initial step that is essential—the step of discerning the difference between satisfying experiences that lead to dependably satisfying consequences and those that lead to unsatisfying consequences.

A key passage in the early Buddhist *sutras* reads :

"Happiness I declare to be two-fold, according as it is to be followed after or avoided. And the distinction I have affirmed in happiness is drawn on those grounds ; when in pursuing happiness I have perceived that bad qualities developed and good qualities were diminished, then that kind of happiness is to be avoided. And when, pursuing happiness, I have perceived that good qualities developed and bad qualities were diminished, then such happiness is to be followed."*

* *Digha Nikaya*, II, 278. (See *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, Vol. III, p. 312.)

Let us expand this profoundly illuminating passage. Every person experiences what appears to be happy fulfillment in two forms. One form proves deceptive. It brings immediate satisfaction, but it weakens one's capacity to realize the conditions of lasting enjoyment. The other form is rarer. It too brings immediate satisfaction, but it is not deceptive, for it strengthens one capacity to realize lasting enjoyment. Through reflection on it one can learn what the conditions of this realization are, and can act in the light of that lesson. According to the Buddha, these are the primary truths about life, and by his intelligence man can master them.

What then is the general cause of *dukkha*? The Buddha locates that cause in *tanha*, another concept for which Western languages have no equivalent. In general, it fills the role in Buddhism that blind "emotion" fills in the description of human nature given by the preceding chapters, although with a narrower meaning. It is usually translated by "desire" or "craving"; but such a translation is inadequate. I suggest that *tanha* means the demandingness, so obvious in a small child and only weakly hidden in many adults, that the universe and society must gratify one's self-centered longings. Now the universe cannot be changed so that it will gratify them, but a person can be changed so that he fully accepts the realities of life for what they are. Hence Buddhism teaches that this demandingness is the root of all evil, that it can be overcome, that each person is responsible to overcome it—indeed, no one else can do it for him—and that by overcoming it he will achieve the greatest of all conquests, the conquest of self. Thus transformed, he will become a source of dependable well-being both for himself and for others as his conduct affects them.

"Self-centered demandingness"; concern "for the well-being of others." If such phrases could be left out it might seem to a Western thinker that Buddhism is simply a practical philosophy of life, having nothing to do with the spiritual dimension of man's experience. But they cannot be left out. The Buddhist view of man is that he seeks an alert and sensitive wholeness, which can only be realized in and through a compassionate love for persons everywhere. When the Buddha sought enlightenment he was concerned for the true well-being of all men and women, which through his self-conquest he could help others win. The freedom, insight, serenity, strength, and joy that characterize an enlightened soul are naturally expressed in an unbounded outflow of love to all. So it is not surprising that Buddhism from its inception became a zealous missionary religion, bringing assurance to people everywhere that a reliable

solution of the universal problem of life has been found and that the way to its attainment is open to everyone.

The third major feature of Buddhism is best understood in the light of this unbounded compassion. That feature is its metaphysical agnosticism—the doctrine that man cannot know the nature of ultimate reality in a form capable of demonstration. This comes as a surprise to thinkers in the West, since there the associations of agnosticism have been quite different. The Buddha seems to have recognized the existence of a changeless realm beyond the changing experience of man. But he steadfastly refused to answer questions about it that have intrigued metaphysicians—such as : Is the world that we find ourselves in eternal ? Can the soul survive death ?* Why did he refuse ? The explanation he gave to his puzzled disciples boils down to this : “Any answer I might offer would be misinterpreted ; to the questioner it would seem to support some metaphysical theory that I do not wish to support.” Is there a fuller explanation ?

The explanation I suggest rests on a conviction which I find revealed everywhere in the Buddha’s teaching and example—namely, that we discriminate wisely between good and bad in human experience by answering the question : Does this act or thought promote liberation from *tanha* or is it a manifestation of *tanha* ? Such a criterion applies to metaphysical thinking—about the soul and about *Nirvana*—as it does to everything else.

How does it apply ? Well, metaphysical questions are such that no universally convincing answer is possible. Hence, on the one hand it is clear that no particular metaphysical doctrine is necessary to spiritual progress ; what one believes on such matters indicates nothing about his moral and religious attainment. On the other hand, if those who inevitably differ in their metaphysical theories insist on regarding them as important they will fall into cantankerous argument, each trying to refute others but being unable to succeed because here there is and can be no generally accepted court of appeal.

When this happens, however, not only does spiritual growth fail to be furthered—it is seriously handicapped. Such a metaphysician is trying dogmatically to impose his ideas about unanswerable questions on other thinkers, instead of preferring the mutual illumination that may come through discussion of questions that can be answered. He is fostering

* See T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1955, Chapter II and especially p. 45.

belligerent controversy instead of growth in compassion and friendly understanding. So the Buddha was convinced that spiritual growth needs no metaphysical dogmas—In fact, if anyone insists on some dogma the primary quest is obstructed instead of aided.* It is a quest for the richer fulfillment and wiser understanding that can be gained irrespective of the beliefs one holds about the universe.

There is a fourth important gift of Buddhism to the world, but it could not appear clearly until several centuries of slowly increasing insight had elapsed and the movement known as Mahayana Buddhism had developed.

What most vividly impressed the Buddha's early followers was his renunciation of worldly activities and even happy family life for the sake of spiritual self-discipline and enlightenment. To Theravada Buddhists in Southern Asia this view of him remained central. He is their master and inspired teacher; they follow him by also renouncing transitory values and devoting themselves to the pursuit of *Nirvana* (the state of supreme realization)** which can be won only by liberation from *tanha*. In this orientation the Buddhist ideal of a spiritual personality is exemplified in the *arhat*—the monk who leaves behind all attachment to ordinary social life and by rugged self-reliance wins liberation.

But gradually over the centuries more and more Buddhists centered their attention rather on the princely heir of wealth and luxury who had given up his worldly power for the sake of the truth that could bring salvation to suffering mankind, and on the Buddha who after attaining enlightenment spent the rest of his life sharing with others the path to salvation he had found. This was a different orientation toward life and its cosmic setting, and it constitutes the fourth major feature that Buddhism has given to the world.

All Buddhists when looking back to their founder speak reverently of the "compassionate Buddha." What does that adjective specifically mean?

To his Theravada disciples it means a warm-hearted pity for the mass of men and women who are wandering in ignorance, with an eager

* See his discourse on *Questions Not Tending to Edification*. It is included in my *Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha*, p. 32 ff. (New American Library, Mentor Religious Classic, M. O. 884).

** Its literal meaning is "extinction," i.e., extinction of the *tanha* which prevents attainment of the spiritual goal.

concern to inspire those capable of doing so to renounce worldly attachments and follow him in the determined quest for full liberation. To his Mahayana disciples it means an experience to which this description is inadequate. Their ideal is exemplified in the Bodhisattva instead of the *arhat*. Now the Bodhisattva is a saintly soul who believes that he has pursued to its end the path insisted on by the Theravadins, but has then faced a question to which they have no sufficient answer. When one looks at the benighted masses of humanity, is it enough simple to teach the truth and give them an inspiring example by his renunciation of worldly values, for them to follow when they are ready? The Theravadin thinks so. He is strongly impressed by the insight that no one can be saved by another person; he must, by his own active effort, save himself.

The Mahayana Buddhist does not reject this insight, but he feels compassion in another form which he is sure expresses a profounder spiritual value. The difference is instructively clarified by asking the question: Can an earnest seeker enter *Nirvana* by himself? The Theravadin answers, "Yes": when a person has fulfilled the inward conditions for entering that state, nothing can keep him out of *Nirvana*. The Mahayana adherent answers, "No": he senses that his own spiritual destiny is intrinsically bound up with the destiny of all his fellows. His conviction is that the highest spiritual state is shown in a realization that one's own salvation is incomplete—nay, even impossible—as long as any other men and women have not found salvation. This is the "great compassion" of Mahayana Buddhists. The underlying presupposition is clearly expressed in John G. Whittier's little poem, "The Meeting":

"He findeth not who seeks his own;
The soul is lost that's saved alone."

So—to explain the Mahayana answer about *Nirvana*—the Bodhisattva refuses to enter it out of a consuming compassion for those who still remain behind. He prefers to wait with them, serving their needs and finding fulfillment in sharing their vicissitudes until all are ready to enter *Nirvana* together. Any state in which he would be separated from them would not be a state of blissful attainment but one of continued imperfection.

The Buddha, he is sure, exemplified this radiant love for others and wanted his followers to exemplify it. It is revealed in a sensitive recognition of the basic unity of all life and especially of the spiritual unity of all human beings, whatever their stage on the road to fulfillment. To

describe the historical transformation in Buddhism briefly, love as compassion *for* others became love as complete oneness *with* others, in a fellowship which accepts no separation as ultimate. In the words of the New Testament, all are "members one of another."

5

What major gift does Hinduism bring to the religion of the future and the evolving community of man? Here, especially, one must be drastically selective in what one emphasizes.

At the heart of that gift lies a single vital conviction, the conviction characteristic of mysticism. It has been missed by no civilized faith, but in Hinduism it fills a quite central role. It is grounded in a vision won through awareness of a realm that transcends our present experience of nature and society. Anyone who lives in that cramped experience is in the eyes of Hindu thinkers only a fragment of man as he truly is. The essence of their conviction can be put thus: There is an ultimate unity beyond the horizon of ordinary existence, through identification with which everything within the horizon is profoundly and joyously transformed. According to Hindu seers, the supreme role of religion is to inspire men to pass from the limited self in its finite world into an unlimited self which is one with the Infinite.

Because of this basic conviction one often meets in Hindu thinkers an uncompromising acceptance of conclusions that other mystics are apt to state in less radical form. An illustration is the forthright assertion by the Vedanta philosophy that God in his Absolute Reality and every person's true self are unqualifiedly one. Its provocative message is this: "You do not need to *become* one with the Divine; that is what you essentially and eternally *are*. All that you have to do is to realize it." Behind this doctrine is a distinctive presupposition, namely, that the ultimate truth about reality is its supertemporal and hence changeless unity. It follows that even though a seeker just beginning his quest naturally feels a need to become different from what he now is, that is a mistake arising from the deceptive limitations of his present state. Really, the only change required is to reject the mistake. There is no implication that this rejection is easy; it will be the most arduous task a person can face.

The unity conceived by the mystic is an all-pervading wholeness which is won by overcoming the divisive forces within or without, and realizing the integrated self that can thus be realized. To the Hindu mystic that self and the universe in which it is at home are the supreme realities. In religious terms such a realization is an experience of unqualified union with God. This union is often forthrightly stressed even by the mystics of Christianity and Islam, which otherwise stress the humble finitude of man in relation with God. Meister Eckhart boldly says :

"If then I am changed into God and He is one with Himself, then, by the Living God, there is no distinction between us... Some people imagine that they are going to see God—they are going to see God as if He were standing yonder, and they are here—but it is not to be so. God and I are one. By knowing God I take Him to myself. By loving God, I penetrate Him."*

It is not surprising that a true mystic of any faith senses at once his kinship with a mystic from another faith and allows no theological differences to hamper his expression of that kinship. All are one with each other in God. A prominent recent example is the Catholic monk Thomas Merton, who experienced such a kinship with the Buddhist monks he visited in southeast Asia.

Hinduism has another gift which may be especially fruitful for religious progress today. That gift is its characteristic view of the great men who have most obviously realized union with the Transcendent Divine.** Many of them have appeared in the course of history, and more will appear ; none is a final or complete exemplar of what that realization involves. For full illumination all of them are needed, as they are born from time to time. Hinduism thus gives no single pioneer any absolute preeminence as other religions have almost always done, and a spiritual leader can at any time become the head of an *ashram* which will spread its influence as widely as his capacity for leadership makes possible. This view of religious history expresses a momentous insight that can be most lucidly stated by saying that in spiritual growth "depth" and "breadth" intrinsically belong together.

In other faiths, depth and breadth have with rare exceptions been separated. That is, when an earnest person sought to deepen his religious experience he took it for granted that this means turning more

* My source for this quotation was Erich Fromm, *op. cit.*, p. 80 f.

** Such a man is an *avatar* (divine incarnation) or a *mahatma* (great soul).

ardently to the special teachings of his own faith and to its historical founder. He assumed that religious devotion is like patriotism ; just as the fervor of the patriot is shown by zealous attachment to his own country, so the fervor of the devout man is shown by clinging in exclusive loyalty to his own tradition. Indeed, many cults in India have assumed this too, thus revealing how powerful its appeal can be. But the most respected leaders of Hinduism have been sure that true spiritual depth is inherently in harmony with the widest spiritual breadth a person might achieve—that an enriched sense of the truth in one's own tradition and a generous appreciation of the truth in other traditions go together. Truth in religion is inclusive, not exclusive. They are convinced that what is most fulfilling for each sincere seeker is heightened rather than weakened by greater empathy with all men in their search for the ultimate goal.

Such unequivocal receptivity is condemned as "eclecticism" by those who feel the need of absolute attachment to some particular faith or sect. But that word is quite inadequate to the religious experience of many Hindu saints. Their heartfelt longing is not to miss any inspiration, any insight, any strength for basic growth wherever in the evolution of man's spiritual pilgrimage it might be found. They are convinced that every person progresses toward true fulfillment, not by rigid attachment to any heritage from the past but by opening himself to all sources of truth, in the present and the future. In the present, by responsiveness to every kind of religious expression and every way of satisfying men's spiritual hunger ; in the future, by realizing that even when all these ways are brought together the whole truth has not yet come into view. Hence continued sensitivity to the transcendent mystery beyond the horizon is essential. Spiritual vision and insight are intrinsically inexhaustible.

Look briefly at the main forms in which this unqualified openness has been shown. The dynamic orientation appears in the fact that while all pioneering teachers in the past are prized and their messages treasured, others are anticipated in the future. The all-inclusive orientation is revealed in several forms. There is the generous recognition that people of different temperaments grow best in different ways. Hence full scope should be given to each of the various "yogas"—*i.e.*, time-tested ways of realizing union with the Divine—the way of loving devotion to an ideal Divine Person, the way of conscientious fulfillment of life's duties, the way of deepening discernment of religious truth, and any other way that proves helpful to an earnest seeker—with no dogmatic commitment to one as against the others. The most instructive form is an eagerness

to learn all that can be learned from other religions. This eagerness was strikingly shown a century ago in the saint Ramakrishna, who longed to realize in his own experience what each great religion means to its zealous adherents ; and in our century it has been exemplified by Gandhi, who was convinced that since there is saving truth in every religion it is not merely presumptuous but even sacrilegious to try to convert the adherent of one faith to another. When consecrating a temple in New Delhi he once said :

"It must be the daily prayer of each adherent of the Hindu faith that every known religion of the world should grow from day to day and should serve the whole of humanity. Thus, far from competing with one another, different religions should help one another to fulfill the highest spiritual promise of which each is capable.

"So we can only pray that a Hindu should be a better Hindu, a Moslem a better Moslem, and a Christian a better Christian. I would not only not try to convert, but would not even secretly pray that anyone should embrace my faith."*

In this generous openness any meeting with a follower of a different religion becomes an opportunity, not to change his creed, but to aid him in whatever way one might to realize more completely the riches he has missed in his own faith. Growing thus in those riches, he will in time come also to appreciate the riches in other faiths.

Swami Vivekananda gave trenchant expression to this spiritual magnanimity when he presented his "Paper on Hinduism" to the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893 :

"The Hindu may have failed to carry out all his plans, but if there is ever to be a universal religion it must be one which will have no location in place or time, which will be infinite like the God it will preach, and whose sun will shine upon the followers of Krishna and of Christ, on saints and sinners alike—which will not be Brahmanic or Buddhist, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum total of all these, and will have infinite space for development—which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms . . . every human being. . . . It is a religion which will have no place for persecution or intolerance in its policy, which will recognize divinity in every man and woman.**

* Quoted in T. M. P. Mahadevan, *Outlines of Hinduism*, Madras, 1940, p. 7.

** See also his lectures at Pasadena in 1900 on "The Way to the Realization of Universal Religion." (Complete Works, Fifth Edition, Vol. II, p. 372.)

This ideal of saintliness, free from any trace of sectarian dogmatism, is not only exemplified in a few spiritual leaders ; it has also flowed into the hearts of the common people of India sufficiently so that they naturally reverence any person in whom they expect such a saintly quality to be shown. What an experience it must have been to Pope Paul VI when on his visit to India in 1964 he found himself devoutly welcomed as a "great guru" not only by Catholics and other Christians but by millions of Hindus who lined his route ! They knew how to unite spiritual reverence with openness to the varied forms in which religious truth may be revealed.

6

We come now to Christianity. What is the special gift of this great religion, which arose in Asia like the others just surveyed but has spread predominantly in the Western world ?

As with every civilized faith, it brings more than a single gift. However, its central contribution to man's spiritual progress is all-important. I hope that a historical portrayal of that contribution will be illuminating to Eastern thinkers who meet as much difficulty in understanding Christianity as Western thinkers do in understanding the Eastern faiths, and also to Christian thinkers. The latter need to overcome their reluctance to ask and answer about Christianity the fundamental questions they naturally ask about other religions, such as : How did the view of their Master as an incarnation of God come about ? Why did Christianity succeed as impressively as it has ?

Jesus of Nazareth is the source of everything original and distinctive about Christianity. Much about him that has been precious in the Christian heritage must here be left aside. To perceive clearly what is central and does not appear in the other great faiths, we must focus mind and heart on the universal Christian symbol, namely, the cross on which he died. It prominently appears wherever Christianity spreads. All the other Christian symbols gain their meaning and power through the central symbol of the cross.

However, the meaning of that symbol is elusive. In the very first generation of Christian history Paul was aware that the cross was a "stumbling block" to the Jews and sheer "foolishness" to the Greeks, and ever since that time it has posed much bafflement to those who seek to

understand. Christian theologians have interpreted it in terms of the presuppositions prevailing at their time and place ; some of those interpretations would horrify most Christians today—*e.g.*, the doctrine that in order to release men from punishment for their sins God required an especially precious sacrifice. But the cross is the central symbol. In a familiar hymn of Sir John Bowring the testimony of Christian piety on that truth is clearly expressed :

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time ;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime....

"Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
By the cross are sanctified ;
Peace is there that knows no measure,
Joys that through all time abide."

How can we interpret aright this message, and the moving experience in which it is grounded ?

To answer, one must first understand the crucial moment in Jesus' career and the great decision he then made. Before that moment, he had carried on his ministry for some time, proclaiming the early coming of God's Kingdom and the need of penitent preparation for it on the part of every person. He had come to believe that he was the promised Messiah—God's anointed agent in establishing the Kingdom. But before long he realized, through the swelling hostility of the Jewish priesthood and such warning events as the execution of John the Baptist, that if he continued his mission publicly in Palestine he would soon meet a similar fate. This was the crucial moment. How could such a dire outcome be reconciled with his Messiahship ? Not only the popular but even the more spiritual view of the Messiah's role expected in him a display of God's power and glory ; they did not expect his death as a condemned criminal.

In this perplexing quandary Jesus appears to have found his guiding insight in the teaching of Second Isaiah, the last of the great Old Testament prophets. What was the heart of that pioneer's message ?

Before the period of the great prophets, the religion practised by the Hebrews was similar in most respects to a typical primitive religion.* The outstanding differences arose from the belief that they were the chosen

* As shown in many early Old Testament passages, notably Judges, Chapters 17 and 18.

people of a divinity named Yahweh and had entered a covenant with Him. Now the earlier prophets, with realistic awareness, perceived that their country was being gradually squeezed by the powerful military empires surrounding it, and foresaw the coming extinction of its independent political life. Their interpretation of that impending catastrophe expressed a new and daring conviction : The Hebrew people had been faithless to the covenant with Yahweh, and the threatened destruction is His drastic punishment for their disobedience. Those prophets had come to believe that he is not just their tribal deity ; He is the sole God of the whole earth, able to use even the mightiest empire as an instrument to fulfill His purposes. They were also sure, however, that He is merciful as well as powerful ; If His people repent of their sins He will forgive them and restore them to His favor.

Second Isaiah lived in Babylon fifty years after the final devastating blow foreseen by his predecessors had fallen. Through his poignant reflection on the awful experience his people had undergone, he gained an original and far-reaching insight.* His central question was : Why did his people have to suffer the horrors of military destruction and captivity in a foreign land ?

He answered it in the framework of the new insight he had gained. The terrible affliction that his people had suffered was indeed a punishment for their sin, but that is only the negative side of its meaning. The far more important positive side is that the ordeal they had lived through was needed to purge them of their vices—in particular, the vice of complacently assuming that since they are God's chosen people He will protect them and give them worldly prosperity. Far from it ; to be the chosen people means instead that they have a unique spiritual role to fill, and God has shown His special love in giving them that role. Their dire suffering was an essential preparation for this task, since without the purging it can bring they could not become the example and teacher to the rest of the world that God is calling them to become. Their sublime vocation is to realize a new national character, which will serve as a light to the other nations and will lead to an era of universal peace and brotherhood.

If his countrymen can share this inspired vision, he believes, they will see their ordeal as spelling hope and gladness for the unfolding future. Thus, although the torment they had experienced seemed at the time to be a merciless punishment, by accepting it in this vision they can

* His message is contained in Chapters 40-55 of the Book of Isaiah.

make it the means to a great good—the spiritual rebirth, first of themselves and then of the whole world.

For several centuries this pioneering message went uncomprehended, except for scattered indications that it had not been wholly lost. But when, nearly 600 years later, Jesus faced the great decision of his career, he found the guidance he needed in Second Isaiah's vision, which he applied to himself in his individual vocation. By its aid he could solve the otherwise baffling enigma ; He is the Messiah, and yet the ministry to which God has called him leads to his crucifixion. The passage which best reveals his solution of that enigma is a brief verse in the Gospel of Mark : "Does not the Scripture say of the Son of Man that he will suffer much and be rejected ?"*

It was a mistake, so he came to realize in the light of this insight, to think that the Messiah on his first appearance would establish the Divine Kingdom in political form. In that appearance his task is simply to preach the good news of God's promise to forgive all who repent, and to inspire as many as possible to meet the inward conditions essential to the coming of the Kingdom. There will be a second appearance, in which a more princely role will be filled. However, he must be prepared by suffering to fill it, just as Israel had to be prepared by suffering for the role of God's special servant to the world. Further, as a Second Isaiah's vision Israel could redeem the other nations by her purified example, Jesus believed that by his willing acceptance of a cruel and humiliating fate he could open a way of redemption to all persons who respond to his message.

Supported by this conviction, Jesus carried out what he now saw as his first earthly mission in obedience to God's will and in loving concern for his disciples. As their teacher, he tried to make them face the coming ordeal ; he tried to explain its significance for his fulfillment of the Messiah's task and for the redemption of the world. They were very obtuse ; it was impossible for them to see how such a tragedy might be part of the course of events essential to inaugurating the Messiah's kingdom. And yet he seems to have sensed that, despite their dullness, the force of his love for them and trust in them would awaken in the future the comprehension that was beyond their capacity then.

His faith proved to be justified, and Chapters 13-17 of John's gospel reveal to the perceptive reader how that deeper understanding was

* Mark 9 : 12. He is referring to Chapter 53 of Isaiah, especially verses 3-5 and 10-12.

gained. In doing so they clarify the meaning of the cross in Christian experience. The other three gospels, written (so historical scholars believe) between A.D. 54 and 95, reflect by and large the religious perspective taken for granted in the Old Testament prophets. True, they see Jesus as the promised Messiah; and they also at times use the phrase "son of God"; but one should not assume that it meant to them what it came to mean in later Christian doctrine. John's gospel, presumably written about 100 A.D., embodies the new insight into Jesus' career that had taken form in the apostle's mind and heart over the decades since the crucifixion. In many respects his message expresses the same orientation as the other gospels, along with special beliefs about such themes as Jesus' performance of miracles, the cosmic history of God's relation to man, the super-terrestrial role of Christ, etc. But the discerning reader will find something else that is very important.

What increasingly impressed John was the Last Supper which the Master and his disciples ate together just before his betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane. The other gospels are satisfied to describe that occasion in a few verses. But John devotes almost one-fourth of his gospel to an account of the Last Supper; it opened to his responsive soul a side of Jesus' nature and a vital element in the Master's message that the other accounts seem to have almost missed.

As John looked back on that memorable occasion he came to realize that Jesus had exemplified the loving concern and readiness humbly to serve others that in Second Isaiah's vision the purified Jewish people would exemplify in relation to other peoples of the world. Although his hour of torture was very near, he could cast off all fear for himself in tender compassion for those sitting around the table. He foresaw that after his death they would meet severe trials and tribulations. In giving himself to them and their needs, despite their inability to understand his words, he forgot the agony he was soon to suffer and showed, as John describes the scene, the inner peace and joy that such freedom from preoccupation with self can bring. His peace and joy were vividly expressed in the sentence, "I have told you these things so that you might have the joy I have had, and that your joy might become complete."*

But the crucial feature in John's insight is an original interpretation of the nature of God, to which he found the key in Jesus' tender concern for his disciples, especially as shown at the Last Supper. The conception

* John 15 : 11.

of God taken for granted in Matthew, Mark, and Luke is the same as that contained in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. Besides being the creator and ruler of the universe, God is the lawgiver to men and the good Father to them as His children. In John that conception is replaced by a basically mystic view of God's relation to men. They attain the spiritual goal, not by obedience to the law given through Moses, but by realizing union with God. Of course John does not deny the traditional Jewish idea of God as a person, with whom men may have a personal relation, but while he retains the language appropriate to this idea, the underlying thought is that God is suprapersonal—He is the infinite spiritual whole of which we men and women are parts. Through sin we have become separated from Him, and salvation consists in overcoming that separation and regaining union with the Divine Whole. To remain separate is spiritual death ; to realize union with God is spiritual life.

How is such a transforming realization won ? Here the full import of John's vision of Jesus' life and his death on the cross becomes clear. Men, lost in the abyss of sin, cannot achieve this union themselves ; it would never be achieved if God did not take the initiative. But He has taken the initiative, as we perceive when we see how He has revealed Himself through Jesus. He is not just an all-controlling power or merciful Father. He radiates everywhere in the universe, throughout all time, the regenerating love that Jesus radiated in the limited temporal and geographic setting of his career ; but it is in that limited setting that His unbounded selfgiving becomes clearly visible to men.

When this new vision was fully developed, it was no longer sufficient to think of Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. For Christian thought he must be the incarnation of God in human form—God being now pictured as leaving the bliss of heaven to share the privations of man's earthly life and the bitterest sufferings men have to undergo, in order to win their responsive union with His unfailing love. The earlier ideas of God, which include a picture of Him as omnipotent might behind the forces of nature and as aloof in His celestial majesty to the vicissitudes of human life, are implicitly left behind in this vision. He is now seen as an inexhaustible life-giving energy, ever reaching out to all creatures who can respond. So far as anyone does respond, he ceases to shrink into his petty separate self in the fear, hate, bitterness, and despair that spell spiritual death. That tempting tendency is reversed ; he expands into union with the boundless divine love. The clarifying analogue in the physical world is light, which by its very nature penetrates the surrounding darkness and turns it into light.

"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."* Here is the heart of John's faith, grounded in his vision of the meaning for humanity of Jesus' death on the cross. When men behold that dramatic event in such a perspective—seeing in it not only obedience to a loving God but also a revelation of divine love itself—they will, he was sure, conquer their dark passions and self-centered urges as they have been unable to before. United with the dynamic energy thus revealed, they can themselves become a medium of its creative action in the world. It was in this setting that "God on the cross" became the central Christian message to men and women. God had made Himself one with them in their sufferings, and that oneness, expressed especially through Jesus' death, came to be central in the theology of John and of Paul.

What happened in subsequent history because of John's vision ?

It became an unparalleled source of hope and joy in Christian experience. Whatever life may bring, whether of grief or gladness, now has fulfilling value ; the earnest follower of Christ can accept it as drawing him closer to God. To respond with thankfulness for the blessings of life has always been easy ; a similar response to the experience of pain or calamity has now become possible.

This response is simply and clearly expressed in the familiar hymn :

"Nearer, my God, to Thee,
E'en though it be a cross that raises me."

Because Christ underwent, in his love for God and for men, the most acute suffering, any evil that may befall a Christian, especially if it comes as a consequence of following the Master and serving his purpose for the world, can be willingly, even joyfully accepted. He experiences oneness with Christ in his suffering as well as oneness with him in his glory. This thought is specifically expressed by Peter in his first letter IV, 12 f. and by Paul in Colossians I, 24. But it also is at the heart of the conviction permeating all Paul's letters—that the Christian experience of suffering is being "crucified with Christ," which can lead to the joyful realization that his sinful self has died and Christ is now living in him. When union with God is thus realized, not only are the blessings of life heightened, but its pain and grief are transfigured ; instead of remaining an evil to be stoically borne they are part of an experience that as a whole is supremely good. The heart of the vision thus expressed has been put into words by George Fox : "I saw that there was an ocean

* John 12 : 32.

of darkness and death ; but an infinite ocean of light and love flowed over the darkness. In that I saw the infinite love of God.”*

And the prayer in which this sense of union with the Master and with God naturally finds expression is : May the love that has been poured out for me flow through me more freely and more fully to others.

The word “agape” thus became indispensable in Christian thought ; it was needed to describe the deeper quality of love as felt by early Christians toward each other and as it formed the core of their ideal attitude toward all persons. A new note had appeared, grounded in the vision of every individual as precious to God. In agape there is ready responsiveness, warm sympathy, tenderness, hope, and cheer. With that vision Christian love met a growing need of men and women in a world torn from its earlier social moorings and constantly tempted into embittered callousness.

7

Enriched by the unique gift of each of these great religions, let us turn again to an all-encompassing perspective on man’s spiritual pilgrimage. What has thus far been achieved ; what defects have not yet been overcome ?

The greatest achievement over the centuries may well be the gradual increase in people’s power both to expand outward in their sensitivity to others and to expand more deeply inward. This is a momentous achievement.

A sad defect of the civilized religions is a persistent tendency of their adherents to regard belief in some doctrine about the founder as more important than emulating his life-giving personality. In Christianity it is the belief that Jesus is the sole Divine Savior ; in Islam, that Mohammed was the last authentic messenger of God ; in Buddhism, that the Buddha was the first to win true enlightenment, etc. In the orientation formed by such beliefs the founder’s message is almost sure to be organized in a set of dogmas that are handed down as an authoritative creed. So far as this happens, a civilized faith fosters divisiveness instead of world community. But this defect has not prevented the sensitive

* *Journal of George Fox*, edited by John L. Nickalls, London, Religious Society of Friends, 1975. p. 19.

adherents of each faith from sharing and communicating the inspired experience of the pioneers.

A common message of these religions to every individual is : "You cannot make the universe obey your present wishes, but you can be transformed yourself so as to become more at home in the infinite whole and a better medium of creative growth in everyone your life touches." What is distinctive in each religion will also not be lost. Taoism may become a major resource of all people who cannot find happiness because they are caught in the prison of hectic competition, Buddhism to all who lack coherent understanding of life and are still prey to the blind force of self-centeredness, Hinduism to all who have not yet moved out of their finite and fragmented experience into the supreme realization of all-encompassing oneness, Christianity to all who desperately seek pleasure, wealth, or power because they have not yet experienced the joy of loving and being loved. What a wonderful blessing to humanity it is that these divergent faiths appeared, each spreading its light to those who were ready to respond ! When anyone is open to truth wherever it can be found and has abandoned all dogmatic conceits, fuller growth in his own faith and profounder appreciation of other faiths will progress together and will support each other. The same transcendent source of light, love, and life spreads its radiance through all faiths—those that now exist and those that will appear in the future.

CHAPTER VII

Journeying Beyond The Horizon

JOURNEYING BEYOND THE HORIZON

For a sound understanding of the human journey it is not enough to survey its past history, nor to face the threats and share the hopes of the present. It is not enough even to peer into the future if one is cautiously fearful of prophesying anything that would not seem probable to a meticulous historian. In venturing another kind of prophecy, I am aware of the grave risk but also of the insistent call today for a prophetic vision. No such vision will be perfect, but to fill its valuable role it does not need to be.

So let us look ahead boldly, first toward the future of humanity on this little planet, then toward whatever superterrestrial destiny might be envisioned. But our prophesying will be confined to the semi-hidden area of man's deepest experience—that is, the area of his spiritual growth. Even within the earthly horizon, this growth is still in its early stages. In attempting such a vision we must be humbly aware of our finite limitations.

1

I prophesy that a new surge of spiritual pioneering will come, possibly as momentous as the remarkable widespread surge in the sixth century B.C. It is needed now as much as it was then. But it will almost surely take a different form than such surges have taken in the past. Of course what has always been central to religion will not be lost—any new surge will provide a way of meeting the total challenge of life, and thus a sustaining at-home-ness in the all-encompassing universe will through it be realized. Contemporary seers are gaining insight that will play a major part in the orientation slowly taking form.

At present it is expressed chiefly in poems and pithy sayings, such as those in *The Prophet* and in Hammarskjöld's *Markings*. A coherent philosophy will in time follow them, interpreting the relation of such insight to other important areas of human experience. At the core of such a philosophy there will be, I forecast, a transformed cosmic perspective and a transformed ideal of spiritual progress.

The cosmic perspective called for must fill its role in the new vista of space and time that is spread before our wondering eyes. The teaching of the great pioneers was naturally couched in the framework of ideas about the cosmic scene and human history that were plausible in their day but are no longer so. People then could believe that above the flat disc of the earth hangs the protecting canopy of the starry heavens where God eternally reigns, and that the flow of time is as finite as geographical space—it began with God's creation of the world about 4000 years earlier and will end when His purpose is fulfilled in a new heaven and a new earth. How radically different is our cosmic and historical perspective today! Spiritual insight must now fully harmonize with new presuppositions in science, philosophy, and history that promise to be increasingly persuasive.

A transformed moral perspective is equally imperative. A new ideal of personal and group relationships has been slowly taking form. It is rooted in the fertile soil of the great religions, but it leads toward wider realization of a quality of soul hitherto exemplified only rarely.

While these developments gradually become obvious, the tumultuous upheaval already evident in the present mundane scene will almost surely swell, and the anxious bewilderment precipitated by it will become more intense. Violent eruptions, now on the increase in many parts of the world, are likely to become more frequent and to take new forms as well as familiar ones. The whole surface of our planet has suddenly become a single neighborhood, which brings magnificent possibilities but also magnified difficulties. The difficulties are made more serious than they would otherwise be, especially in the Christian West, by loss of the inherited moral absolutes that in the past have restrained men from destructive outbreaks. People no longer fear that if they reject those absolutes eternal punishment in hell will be their fate.

Cults of every imaginable kind are arising and making their appeal to souls hungry for light and guidance. The bewilderment men and women feel today is likely to spread everywhere and to become more disruptive until another set of basic convictions, permeated by spiritual

insight but grounded in a framework wholly acceptable to modern minds, has been envisioned and widely adopted. Of course religious movements in a traditional pattern still appear, but their influence is weak and transitory.

The prospect is very sobering—but soul-stirring also.

What human plight could provide a more propitious setting for a new spiritual awakening? The great awakenings of the past were responses to just such a plight on a less planetary scale. The unprecedented visions caught and exemplified in all regions of the civilized world in that brilliant sixth century B.C. were a response to poignant perils that could not be met in the spiritual perspectives then available. The same was true of the Mediterranean region at the birth of Christianity. People were torn from their earlier socio-religious moorings and were yearning for a more dependable foundation.

Will an analogous prophetic vision, now on a planet-wide arena, appear as soon as pioneers arise who in the face of the present drastic challenge can lead in such an awakening? One's hopeful watch for an authentic pioneer should not be blinded by the fact that spiritual response to an unprecedented crisis cannot become full-fledged quickly, and that it may take forms which at first do not look religious because they are expressed in unfamiliar terms. Perhaps such leaders have already been born, but are recognized as yet only by a few. In any case, the hunger for spiritual sustenance that must be met is world-wide and acute.

2

Where should we look for the pioneers of a perceptive response to the present upheaval? Who will initiate the new awakening?

The spiritual leaders of the past won their transforming renewal, and found invigorating contact with the invisible energy ever revealed in man's basic growth, by a quite different route than the calm contemplation of theological ideas. The new message that came to them came in and through a burning zest to fill an emptiness that their religious heritage could not fill, or through compassionate involvement with men and women around them who were threatened with a catastrophe they did not know how to meet. The souls of those pioneers were in anguish as they grappled with the issues of life and death, hope and

despair, love and hate, truth and untruth, creation and destruction. It was in such an awesome ordeal that they experienced the Divine presence, and a new faith for the future was won. A meaning for the word "God" was born in their souls that could sustain, reassure, and bring the more abundant life that religion at its best always brings. Among other things, it carries an imperative call to action. Gandhi once said, "I know that I shall never know God if I do not wrestle with and against evil even at the cost of life itself."* Having been re-created themselves by their drastic purging, the spiritual pioneers went forth to re-create the world.

Will it not be the same today? The spasmodic outbreaks and destructive violence now spreading through much of the world cannot help overwhelming many men and women. But there are persons who have the resources to face the challenge, to endure the anguish, and to emerge with a deepened faith in God and man. They include some who lived through the agonizing horror of the Nazi concentration camps,** likewise some who survived the devastating Hiroshima bombs, and as a result found inner peace and hope for humanity's future. More persons like them will be born.

A profound insight of the spiritual pioneers is this: If a person is to be capable of enduring joy he must also be capable of sorrow and pain; those who avoid the latter cannot experience the former. The Russian poet Yevtushenko has said, "People who never knew the price of happiness will not be happy."*** Instead then of seeking escape from the woes of life, one who shares this insight is ready to play his part in facing and overcoming them. The encompassing Divine Whole does not save him from pain, but gives him strength to live through it.

Look among such men and women for the pioneers of our era! They are finding the indestructible inner freedom realized by all who are fully free—the freedom of a dedicated self whose integrity holds firm whatever external forces may do. Examples of such persons are visible wherever one turns. Think of those imprisoned or tortured or exiled—for conscientious protests in America against war, for refusing to silence their humane concern in Communist countries, for loyalty to rectitude

* Frontispiece of Annada Shankar Ray, *Yes, I Saw Gandhi*, Bombay, 1976.

** Read Victor C. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Pocket Books, New York, 1963.

*** From his message on the 1970 document circulated in support of the work of the Peruvian Emergency Relief Committee.

and compassion or for unshakeable resistance to tyrants in some other region of the world. These men and women know that by obeying an unjust command or participating in any callous inhumanity their souls would be lost—a disaster more unbearable than any physical punishment. The greatest danger to those in power is not a political or military rebellion, but men and women committed to do what is right at any cost to themselves.

Some will naturally interpret such an ordeal and its regenerating outcome in the language of Christian theology ; some will interpret it in the inherited language of another religion ; some (perhaps many) will interpret it in new language born of the wholesale convulsion of our time and more in accord with the new moral perspective and cosmic understanding that spiritual insight must now respect. Any person who has plumbed the depths by this path and has come through the darkness knows the Divine Reality, whether or not he uses traditional religious terms.

It would be presumptuous to prophesy what this anticipated surge of spirituality will teach as its central message. But a humble step in that direction should not be too daring. One might be sensitive enough to the present human plight to discern some vital needs that the coming surge will seek to satisfy.

What needs are especially pressing today ?

3

The central need is another major step toward the world community, toward wholeness within each person, and toward union with God as the transcendent energy revealed in every creative achievement. But a few more specific needs can also be discerned.

One of them is to recover the inspired visions of the past, while freeing them from handicaps to their moving power. Even primitive religions have deep insights which are now in danger of being lost through the steady expansion of civilization. They gained profound intuitions of the holy in nature and beyond nature ; in doing so they tapped sources which the civilized religions almost ignore in their zest to purge spirituality from all that might corrupt it. And so far as the latter are concerned, even the most understanding among the followers of a great pioneer do not catch the whole of his creative insight. What is left out needs to be recovered.

But ancient visions will be valuable now only if they are freed from contradictions that were unavoidable in the past but severely handicap spiritual progress today.

Ponder some contradictions in the Christian scriptures. In the Old Testament there are Psalms imploring God to take ruthless vengeance on the Psalmist's enemies, along with those expressing sensitive and uplifting piety. In the New Testament there are passages threatening endless torture to recalcitrant sinners along with those proclaiming a hopeful future for all men. Evangelists of a century ago used to preach the horrendous doctrine of eternal hell-fire, and it had its effect when fearful submission to the Almighty Will was widely felt to be the essence of religion. But today that doctrine is likely to be met by the unanswerable rejoinder: "Then the being you call God I would call the devil."

Such liberating steps should be frankly avowed, so that puritive ideas will no longer obstruct religious understanding.

A second major need that the new awakening will surely meet arises from the intense interaction today between people all over our planet. The present civilized religions grew up in geographic and cultural separation from each other. It is hard to realize that only a generation or two ago few men and women were even aware of distant peoples' existence. This change has brought rapidly increasing intercommunication between their religions; the adherents of no faith are protected any longer from the impact of others. In this kaleidoscopic planet-wide interaction a fruitful dialogue between adherents of the various religions is developing. Eastern thinkers have already been learning from the West, and perceptive Western thinkers are now telling their fellows that "our descendants are not going to be just Western, like ourselves. They are going to be heirs of Confucius and Lao-tze as well as of Plato and Plotinus."*

The religions of the future will grow in responsive awareness of each other. Immense possibilities arise from this expanding intercommunication. For one thing, practices appearing anywhere that foster spiritual life are spreading everywhere. An example is the growing use of regular periods of meditative stillness, long emphasized in the East. By its very nature quiet meditation, with whatever degree of concentration a person is capable of, augments his power to win a long run perspective and to progress from wherever he now is toward greater realization. It enables

* Arnold Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial*, New York, 1948, p. 90.

him to clarify and organize his primary values. Especially supporting is meditation in a group sharing primary values ; each member can see depths in his fellows and in himself that he could not see before. He opens himself more widely and more completely. Such meditation provides an inspiring medium in which his strengths are strengthened and his weaknesses weakened. When one leaves that probing experience he can preserve, amid the noisy bustle of the outside world, something of the sustaining stillness within. Among other things, future religion will leave behind the male supremacy that has been such a disgrace to the civilized faiths in the past. The ideal partnership between man and woman will be encouraged. Some of the new pioneers will surely be women, and women will play their full part in the religious institutions that develop and in new theological formulations.

Many religious persons naturally expect a single superleader of this new spiritual awakening. But why would there not be many leaders ? Can any single pioneer have all the insight needed ? If not, many will arise and the true pioneers who are contemporaries will know of each other's existence and will be eager to engage in a fraternal dialogue. I prophesy that they will meet and converse, will learn from each other, and will experience the encouraging support such collaboration can bring.

In virtue of their unity of spirit such leaders will in effect create a single religious association instead of each founding his own church—an association that may prove more enduring than the now existing churches. Followers strongly attracted to a particular leader will gather together to share in their special way, but every community thus arising would respect other communities as equals and would search with them for the fuller truth. That shared search and the mutual stimulation it brings would be the uniting bond ; no common creed in the traditional sense would be needed.

This forecast has radical implications. A major implication concerns the relation of a spiritual leader to his disciples. I prophesy that the perceptive leaders of the future will avoid the mistake of wanting their disciples to be docile followers. As they would not be followers of any other leader because they respond to all sources of spiritual insight, so they would not want anyone to become their docile follower. Their hope will be that others would identify with them in their unqualified openness to truth and to truth-seekers everywhere, each gaining his own spiritual independence. To expect this is not to forget that a charismatic personality will always exert a special influence.

However, this prophesy can only be wisely fulfilled as men and women become able to guide their conduct by moral principles freely and understandingly accepted instead of by rules laid down by some authority. To conform to externally imposed precepts as all must do in early childhood is not a sound moral practice for adults. I realize that some readers might well doubt whether all people can achieve this independence.

But history reveals a significant advance toward the ideal moral freedom. In the Jewish-Christian tradition, for example, progress is evident from a mass of detailed observances enjoined in the earliest Old Testament period to the simpler set of Ten Commandments and then from those to the two all-inclusive precepts of loving God and loving one's neighbor as oneself. Such precepts cannot be followed blindly—they are guiding principles rather than rules. Moreover, a corresponding advance is visible in the faith that all persons can acquire the capacity to follow them wisely. Jeremiah looked forward to the time when God would not write the laws of right conduct on tablets of stone but on the heart of each individual so that he would be guided by them from within.* And in the New Testament a central doctrine in St. Paul's teaching is that true Christian faith liberates men from all traditionally prescribed laws; the Christ within will guide them aright.

Surely the pioneers of the future will seek to awaken trustworthy moral independence in the persons whom they influence. The greatest among them will be those who are most skillful in eliciting the unique gift that each person they meet might bring to the authentic growth of humanity. When a religious brotherhood develops in this direction its teaching will become, not an authoritative creed to members of a sect as it has in the past, but an illuminating resource to liberated men and women of every sect. In such a setting, piety toward the special heritage of any religious group will become grateful appreciation for the distinctive gift it has brought. All earnest souls will realize that their piety must accord with full respect for the piety of others whose special heritage is different. Then the riches of all faiths can freely enter into and become part of the richness of each.

A breathtaking epoch will surely open for civilized religion as it more and more exemplifies this all-inclusive fellowship and leaves behind every trace of sectarian dogmatism. Spiritually minded thinkers will glimpse visions of a new fulfillment for man in the cosmic and moral universe he has then entered. This will meet a third need, since the most perceptive

* Chapter 31 : 33.

of those visions will guide their fellows into a vaster experience and a grander universe than could be imagined in the past.

Two millennia and more ago in Western Asia the psalmist beheld the universe filled with the glory of God—and it was a sublime vision. But the glory he perceived was unavoidably imperfect it reflected the search of Hebrew seers for the sublimity that could be glimpsed in the restricted arena of their experience and expressed in their limited framework of thought. A millennium and a half later Dante put into glowing words the vision of mediaeval Christianity ; it too unveiled a dazzling scene, but one relative to the narrow cosmology of his time and place. Later in Europe came the vision of the Enlightenment with its faith in a rational society of rational men in a rational universe. The East has also had its visions and will continue to have them.

The pioneers of the future, responsive to the aspirations of men and women throughout our whole planet, will envision the divine glory in that inclusive setting. And today an unprecedented celestial panorama has opened before us, with human explorers landing on the moon and instruments of informative communication on Mars. The coming pioneers will be ready to appreciate the aspiration of intelligent beings elsewhere in the unbounded spatial universe when contact with them is made.

In such an all-encompassing perspective persons with literary talent—dramatists, poets, and novelists—will give vivid expression to the vistas that a spiritual imagination can glimpse. The great geniuses of the past will renew their illuminating beneficence. What rare perceptiveness Shakespeare reveals ! He portrayed with keen discernment men and women of the most varied characteristics, some highminded and noble, some very detestable. All are portrayed in a realistic perspective ; he seems able to identify unreservedly with each. Often, moreover, before the drama ends, his impartial insight leads to a deepened awareness, to a serene acceptance of life in both its goodness and its badness, and even to redeeming reconciliation.*

The literary pioneers of the future will awaken their fellows to new possibilities that thus become articulate. The visions inherited as a precious gift from the past may in time appear feeble ventures toward the majestic vistas that will open up as seers reach out from the cramped perspective of this or that nation, sect, or culture to glimpses of the full promise of human life in unlimited interaction and intercommunication.

* As in *Romeo and Juliet*.

The ideal will be that every person may realize the strength to see, hear, feel, and think with his whole self and in harmony with the whole of reality.

4

Should we expect that in the course of this anticipated awakening a universal religion will arise, gradually accepted by the whole of mankind ?

Many hope so. They long for the tranquil brotherhood that such an outcome seems to promise. But consider. Does the realization of a peaceful world community require that there be but one nation, one economic system, one artistic style, one philosophy or ideology ? Destructive conflict in each of these areas must end, but interplay of different views is both inevitable and desirable. The unity essential to true community is no drab conformity to some single set of doctrines—it is rather a unity allowing the widest scope for diversity and the fullest encouragement of original insight.

Is it not the same in religion ? There is no chance that any existing faith will convert all people to its fold ; none possesses the whole truth, and each has dangerously compromised with greedy worldly interests. A humane and sympathetic Christian worked for some time among people in the Near East without telling them whom he represented. When he finally divulged that he was a Christian he met this answer : "Impossible ! For hundreds and hundreds of years the Christians have hated us, have fought us, have invaded our country, killed our people by the thousands and tried to overthrow the government. But you do nothing but love us, show us every kindness, and give yourself unselfishly to us. No, never ! You cannot be a Christian."* Moreover, new religions will be born from time to time as they have in the past, each adding its gift to man's spiritual progress. When this continuing diversity is stressed, the community of man can be portrayed as a cooperative association of regional communities rather than as a single planetary fellowship.

What is surely desirable is that theologians of all faiths spend less time on issues that arise in their sectarian background and give more time to problems that are fundamental to all civilized religion, such as : determinism and free will, a personal vs. a super-personal conception of God,

* See D. F. Fleming, *Ways of Sharing with Other Faiths*, New York Association Press, 1929, p. 125.

the relation between human effort and divine grace, between morality and religion, between time and eternity. That will be a natural step when one seeks spiritual truth, fully sensitive to other thinkers everywhere. A few such theologians will also accept the colossal challenge to glimpse as best they can an inclusive vista that would make room for what is enduringly precious or will become so in all faiths.

5

Through his ability ever to expand awareness man aspires beyond every horizon that might seem to limit him. Thus far we have confined ourselves to the horizons that separate his present from his future on the surface of this little planet. But there is a horizon in a more radical sense. It marks the boundary between the terrestrial and a vaster realm.

Can we peer, and even reconnoiter, beyond that boundary ? Many thinkers say with assurance, no. The spiritual seers answer confidently, yes. We shall venture with them beyond the earthly horizon.

The conviction that there is a realm encompassing and surpassing the realm of our mundane experience has been perennially expressed in two ideas. One is the idea of a Divine Being, who is immanent in man and in nature, but also transcends them. The other is the idea of immortality. Man has dared to envisage his continued existence in some form after leaving the scene of his earthly strivings. If these ideas are not wholly deceitful, the universe extends beyond the horizon in this radical fashion, and by virtue of his spiritual capacity man is related to that vaster domain.

Today a third idea begins to play a part. It has always been evident that the life of the human race is finite in time, for the physical conditions on which it depends will not last forever. But in the past it was easy to assume that man could look forward to a lengthy future, and to ignore the plight of those remote descendants to whom its end will become an immediate threat. Now that he has entered the nuclear age and sees the possibility of ecological suicide, he knows that he is in that plight himself. Mankind will live henceforth with the stark possibility of expiring at any moment.

What lies beyond the death of the whole human race ? Here is an unexpected challenge to spiritual understanding. It is not entirely new ; traditional ideas about God included the belief that, no matter what

men may do in their madness, He will not be frustrated. And it happens that the nuclear age is also an age in which we can perceive, as our forefathers could not, the stupendous immensity of the universe.

But despite its immensity man is obviously related to the whole of it. Through his outreach of mind and heart he makes contact both with finite objects and with the Infinite. Perhaps through this active outreach man's strivings on the surface of the earth contribute their bit toward a larger adventure, however long or short his career here turns out to be.

How might meaning be given to this possibility? The "objective" evidence strongly suggests that sheer extinction must sooner or later be the fate of the human race. If that is not to be the case, why not?

6

The central concept of religion is the concept of God, which the preceding chapter has explored in its primary role—the role of guiding and satisfying man's spiritual seeking. In that quest we were led to the word "wholeness," through which to articulate what he is growing toward, nothing that "whole" and "holy" come from the same root. When one who is alert to the spiritual dimension of life seeks closer contact with God, he seeks a fuller and richer wholeness in which to live and think.

Now, however, we are inquiring as philosophers and theologians. The history of theology is replete with endeavors to put the results of such an inquiry into systematic form. Each system satisfied a group of earnest thinkers, and each naturally took for granted a cosmological perspective that seemed plausible at the stage reached by philosophy and science in its day. But men and women now live in a cosmological perspective very different from that of any of their forebears. How can a growing realization of the Divine Wholeness be wisely described in that perspective, so that its relation to other phases of our experience will be no more mysterious than is inevitable?

In several branches of modern science the concept of "field" has come to fill a fruitful role. It may be just what is needed in our present quandary. A field is an aggregate of parts, and also has its character as a whole. That which a spiritual seeker grows in and toward can become for cosmological explanation a "field", in which the whole

influences what happens in the parts influence each other and the whole. Let us not presume to regard this as a definition of God ; rather, in our quest to understand beyond the horizon as fully as is possible, the concept of field becomes especially helpful. By it we can relate the infinite divine radiance to the finite persons and objects that everywhere in the boundless universe are progressing toward fuller life.

7

Two themes remain, posed by the stern threat of extinction for the human race as well as for each individual. But they easily merge into a single theme. All who say "yes" to life will continue to say it, undeterred by that threat in both cases. However, a novel question naturally arises : Besides the possibility of immortality for the individual, can an analogous possibility be glimpsed for the human race ? If so, in what form might it be plausibly pictured ?

Let us meditate on life and death. Could there be a universe without life—that is, life as we know it ? It would seem so ; for billions of years after our earth was born there was no life on it. Could there be a universe without death ? It would likewise seem so, at least without death as we know it. For billions of years after life appeared on the earth, it apparently existed in the form of single-celled organisms propagated by fission. When one of them grew too large it divided, and wither half died. (That is, there was no death from the aging process with which we are familiar, although such organisms could be crushed by an external force.) But to avoid death in this way life had to pay a high price, the price of extreme stagnation. If there was to be progress toward more resourceful living forms, mutations from that prototype had to appear and with them death, weeding out the less fit mutations and giving full opportunity to the fitter ones.

Hence, if we value continued progress, will we not accept the inevitability of death for mankind as well as for each individual, and also the fact that it may come at any time ? But it would be dismal indeed if it must be accepted despairingly, or defiantly, or even casually. Can we accept it in trust and gratitude—gratitude for the rich experience that has been ours, with all it has meant and all it may still mean in whatever span of life lies before us and our descendants ?

Dag Hammarskjöld has said :

"Do not seek death ;
Death will find you.
But seek the road which makes death
a fulfillment."*

How may death become a fulfillment ?

All men will die. Yet, in the case of those who have probed the prospect thoughtfully, rarely does the answer that death is sheer extinction seem coercive. In some sense they share Socrates' faith that "no evil can happen to a good man, in life or in death."** When one fully accepts death instead of trying to forget it or dulling his sensitivity to it, can it become something more than the terminus of life ?

We will think about this question in the setting of man's moral growth and spiritual possibilities. There are tempting evidences in the region of parapsychology—evidences of telepathy, precognition, independence of our bodily senses, communication with deceased persons—and there are other instructive phenomena such as those revealed in *Life after Life*.*** The crucial questions are : What kind of life after death is worth having ? Can one prepare for death in such a way that it becomes an episode in the expansion from his past and present into a richer selfhood ?

Recall at this point man's powerful urge for self-preservation, and the vital truth that the self to be preserved is always larger than the greedy individual self. It is the self able and ready to sacrifice its existence for the sake of family, tribe, or nation, without whose support no reliable fulfillment for any self would be possible. Now the pioneers of civilized religion, as we know, discovered a still larger self, and self-preservation gained a new meaning. That self identifies its life with the enduring good of all men, and willingly leaves behind every lesser form of existence when such a sacrifice is needed. A person thus moved does not wait for proof that he is immortal. And it may be that a significant insight about man is revealed by this fact. Look at the men and women who dedicate themselves to an inspiring social cause ; they are ready to be sacrificed for that cause, and ask for no personal reward either on earth or in heaven.

* *Markings, op. cit.*, p. 159. Note what is said on the preceding page also.

** See Plato's *Apology*, 41, c.

*** By Raymond Moody, Jr., published 1975 by Bantam Books.

And yet, the great religions bring a special message that may be enlightening. It is that a primary task during this brief span of physical existence is to prepare for death. How does one prepare for it? Can one make it a step toward fuller life?

Every person begins his existence as a baby—as a mass of bodily demands pressing insistently for satisfaction. Those demands continue their pressure as he grows toward adulthood, so he feels a persistent longing for pleasurable warmth and gratification. When that longing is unsatisfied, he becomes tense and angry. One who realizes this truth can understand why the ascetic is moved to free himself completely from these demands; at all costs he must win the victory over them, even over the imperious urges for food and sex. And one also understands those who frankly accept dependence on the body and its fate. King Khufu of Egypt built at enormous cost the Great Pyramid, hoping that it would protect his embalmed mummy forever and thus assure his immortal existence.* Many Christians through the centuries could feel sure of their survival after death only by believing in the resurrection of the body at the Second Coming.

But the close connection of the most intense pleasures and pains with some part of the body may simply show that the bodily self and the childish self are practically the same. Is growth toward maturity a transition from preoccupation with one's bodily self to a state whose center of concern is outside that self? Of course one may prepare for death by gratifying as fully as possible before he dies the cravings of this or that part of the body. But such behavior only makes death more obviously final. Perhaps to prepare for death is to win strength to live beyond the compulsions of the body, responding to values that are independent of its demands.

Think of a person passing from middle life to old age without this strength. To him life is losing its value. The things he had prized in his younger days now seem empty or are no longer attainable. He is assailed by apathy and ennui, or a desperate urge to grasp after the satisfactions that have slipped away. No matter how kind the universe has been to him, he is unhappy instead of grateful. If his anxious state of mind were frankly put into words they would be: "Old age is coming. People will ignore me when I am no longer of any use. There will be nothing ahead except more weakness, further loss of my faculties—and

* The pyramid still remains after nearly five thousand years, but the vault containing the mummy was in time pillaged. The belief appears to have been strong in early Egypt that future life depends on the preservation of one's body.

death, which may be preceded by the painful semi-death of vegetating in a retirement or nursing home."

8

A paradox often is illuminating as well as provocative : A person can die before he dies—that is, he can die to the petty self with which he began life, having passed into a larger self capable of a richer life.* Indeed, each step in one's basic growth may be described as a "little death" ; it means the passing away of part of that petty self. But it is also a "little new birth"—the birth of a part of the larger self one is becoming.

The religious pioneers have tried to communicate a revolutionary lesson about life and death. Its core is that what people ordinarily think of as life is in a spiritual perspective death, and what they ordinarily think of as death may be an episode in the enhancement of life. The "playboy," according to an advertisement glorifying him, is characterized by a "lust for life." But what kind of life does he lust for ? The pioneers are concerned with a life that promises, not transitory exhilaration but trustworthy fulfillment.

To express this thought more fully : When one becomes conscious of his existence he has already been cast on the shore of physical life, and sees physical death looming ahead—he is passing from life to death. To prepare for death is to seize the opportunity given by physical life to realize that he is spiritually dead, and that he needs to pass from that death to spiritual life—from the self-centeredness that inevitably perishes to the outflowing sensitivity that is the essence of growing and vigorous life. Thus a more abundant fulfillment is won, and everything in him—body, mind, and soul—is now an instrument for expressing the values that have become supreme. Death can be accepted, like other episodes, as such an instrument.

A saintly woman about to die of an incurable disease was asked by her grandson : "Where will you be when you are dead ?" She was aware that it would not be true to reply "nowhere" ; still less to specify any particular place or area. So, conscious of her unbounded sensitivity to everyone and everything, which had become the core of her selfhood, she said in serene assurance : "Everywhere."

* There is of course a quite different and pathetic way in which a person can "die before he dies"—that is, he can become physically helpless mentally out of touch with reality.

Pause over this deceptively simple word, "life." Some might object that if a spiritual dimension of life and death must be recognized, quite different from the physical dimension, it would be clearer to refer to it in other terms. But from the viewpoint of one who is growing in that dimension this would be a failure to describe in the most natural way the revolution he has experienced. He has been reborn. Whatever lies ahead as he continues to grow is what he freely accepts as essential to the larger self he is becoming. The enlargement thus realized brings nothing less than a new vitality. In such a perspective everyone is challenged to become less dead and more alive than he now is. Did not Jesus have these truths in mind when he said : "He that saveth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for my sake shall save it" ; and St. Paul likewise in his teaching about conversion, namely that it consists in dying to physical life with its selfcenteredness and being born into a new life in Christ ?

In this setting, how to prepare for the death of the body is no longer puzzling. One can fully accept that death, if he has already begun to live beyond the body and its demands. Reflect at this point on a trenchant passage in *Doctor Zhivago* :

"So what will happen (at death) to your consciousness ?
Your consciousness, not anyone else's. Well, what are you ? There's the point. Let's try to find out. What is it that you have always known as yourself ? Your kidneys ? Your liver ? Your blood vessels ? No. However far back you go in your memory, it is always in some external, active manifestation of yourself that you come across your identity—the work of your hands, in your family, in other people. And now listen carefully. You are in others—that is your soul. That is what you are. That is what your consciousness has breathed and lived on and enjoyed throughout your life—your soul, your immortality, your life, your life in others ; and you will remain in others. ...What does it matter to you if later on this is called your memory ? This will be you—the you that enters the future and becomes part of it."*

The thought here can be thus expressed : A person lives in what he cares for or has created, *i.e.*, in the love that actively flows from him. With this thought in mind, ponder John's teaching on the relation between love and immortality. "We have passed from death to life ; this we know because we love our brothers."** Is not the underlying

* *Doctor Zhivago*, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

** I John 3 : 13.

assurance this ? —a person who loves thereby identifies himself with someone or something beyond his own bodily existence, whereas one without love is attached to that cramping existence. However intensely he may crave survival, all that he cares for is obviously transitory. So one who loves can take physical death (his own or the death of those he loves) realistically and seriously but does not need to take it grimly. It is an episode in the larger life on which he has entered. For him the big death is not the death of the body but the death of his self-centered ego. The insight of which this becomes a central part is supported by many experiences, such as those described in *Life after Life*. Persons who were resuscitated after the body had been pronounced dead tell of a warming flow toward them of a compassionate understanding which suffused their temporary release from the body and was not lost when they resumed their former life. They felt and retained the joy of increased power to love and understand.

"Not where I breathe, but where I love, I am."*

The word "identify" plays a vital part in describing this transformation. Through love one identifies himself with some reality beyond his body. Of course the word can be taken as merely an enticing metaphor. But it can be experienced as more than a metaphor—as indicating a real absorption in someone or some process outside oneself, which then no longer is outside. One has been bound to the body but now has expanded into a more capacious self which has left its previous limits behind. Thus liberated, a human soul has entered infinite life, and becomes an overflowing spring of energy, realizing a new freedom, strength, and joy.

Consider what is distinctive about this radically dynamic experience. A typical inanimate body can move only in one direction at a time, retaining its size and shape. A living organism can move in several directions at the same time, as it grows from a small seed to its full stature. But that growth ceases at a limit set by the inbred nature of the species to which it belongs ; its relation to other things is an external relation except for those it assimilates into its own substance. What then is the case with a human soul ? Its very essence is to expand as widely as its responsiveness to other realities makes possible. It "does not grow like a reed, but unfolds itself, like a lotus of countless petals."** The

* I believe this is a quotation from one of Emma D. E. N. Southworth's writings, but have not located the source.

** Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*, op. cit., p. 63.

center of a physical object or merely organic entity is within its own body, but the center of a growing soul is beyond the body ; it is always reaching out and becoming one with everything it is open and sensitive to. The simple but momentous insight is : "We are mortal when we are loveless, immortal when we love."* When this insight has dawned, one sees that self-centeredness, however aggressive it may be, is death ; giving oneself freely is life.

Through what concepts might this insight be clarified further ?

The concept of "field" appeared to throw light on God's relation to man, and the phrase "spiritual field" provided a fruitful key. Could it be that a human soul is also better understood through the concept of field than through our inherited theological ideas ? How does such a concept differ from the traditional Western idea of the soul ?

That idea rests on two age-old presuppositions : one of which is expressed in the theological definition of "soul" as a metaphysical substance that at any given time is either wholly present or absent ; the other is expressed in the social and political notion of individuality—the notion that every person is a separate entity, intrinsically independent of all other persons. If one examines what a personality is like through the concept of field, what happens to these presuppositions ?

As for the first, when a person examines the process of basic growth, does not the ancient definition of soul lose all plausibility ? He discovers that the core of himself is not a fixed substance but an exuberant energy, ever leaving some of its elements behind and adding others through which a greater selfhood is realized. But especially intriguing possibilities appear when the second presupposition is thoughtfully examined. Every person is an individual, and his individuality never needs to be lost. But no person is separated from other persons. The presupposition that individuality involves separate existence reflects the revolt of Western man against the repressive social controls in religion, economics, and politics to which during the mediaeval period his forebears submitted. When, in freedom from that presupposition, one observes a person, does he not perceive that person as an energetic process of interaction with the world and especially with other people ? Look at cases of strong mutual affection where a change of mood in one person is at once sensed by the other, or cases of mob psychology where a wave of fear or rage spreads hypnotically through a group.

* Karl Jaspers, *The Future of Mankind*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1961, p. 339.

Thus viewed, a person is obviously both receptive and creative—receptive so far as other entities (including the field as a whole) impinge upon his body and mind, creative so far as his body and mind impinge upon them. He receives and creates as a unique individual, but if he were separated from others neither mode of interaction would be possible.

With the concept of "field" giving its help, we will explore further what happens in the expansion of a human personality.

As a person grows toward his greater self, he identifies progressively with social wholes that are more inclusive and enduring than his childish self ; at first with his family, then with his peer group, vocational associates, religious community, fellow citizens, and others. The process has no intrinsic limit ; hence through continued expansion he may become one in feeling with the whole of encompassing reality. His initially vague awareness of that whole can grow into a fulfilling oneness with all his fellow men and with God. The great pioneers experienced that oneness. And this identification with a larger whole may become so strong that in many situations it requires an effort to attend to any part by itself. Tolstoi tells how Platon Karatiev "could not grasp the significance of words taken away from the sentence." Just as they had real meaning to him only in the sentence, so "his life . . . had no meaning as a separate life. It had meaning only as part of a whole, of which he was at all times conscious."* If one has given oneself to a larger whole before death, the giving that nature requires at death is easily accepted ; he lives already beyond his body and his finite self.

9

Can this larger life in a larger whole be clarified further ? Consider the possibilities that are suggested by the astronomic immensity opening before us today. A generation ago all but a few scientists seemed to believe that intelligent life is restricted to our little planet. But now it appears very likely that intelligent creatures exist elsewhere. In our galaxy, the Milky Way, there are 100 million stars or more, and spread over the sidereal universe there are billions of galaxies. Many stars presumably have planets, and even if only a small fraction of them have generated the conditions for life and mind, there could be a sizeable number on which creatures endowed with alert awareness exist. Groups of scientists are already trying to communicate with these hypothetical beings.

* *War and Peace*, abridgement by Edmund Fuller, Dell Publishing Co., 1961, p. 443.

An unprecedented problem is posed by this attempt. What relation might we realistically hope to establish with them ?

If any communication with such beings must take place according to physical laws as now understood on our planet, the messages would have to be carried by rays of light and therefore their transmission would be limited to the speed of light. On this assumption, the prospect of conversational interchange with intelligent creatures elsewhere in the sidereal vastness becomes dubious indeed. Except for possible participants in such a dialogue whose habitat is fairly near the earth, they are an immense distance away. It would take millions of years (or longer) for a question to be conveyed to them, and the same time for an answer to make its way back. A rather frustrating dialogue !

However, this assumption may not be necessary. Astronomical observations now, to many scientists, support the conclusion that there are celestial bodies moving much faster than the speed of light. Such speeds must then be possible. Also, radically new techniques of communication, not dependent on light, may be developed. Hence traditional assumptions about motion and light do not need to limit our thinking. It may be that the physical laws scientists have verified hold only in our region of the universe ; it may even be that human notions of space, time, and motion are very parochial. With these possibilities in mind, quite different ways of interstellar communication can be seriously considered.

To aid this inquiry, let us ask : What is the source of the conscious sensitivity of a human being—the sensitivity expressed whenever he perceives any object or actively relates to any person ? An intriguing answer is : It arises from the less conscious sensitivity of each cell and organ in his body, as according to biological law every such unit enters into orderly collaboration with its companion cells and organs. Each of these units (so to say) subordinates the desire for its own satisfaction to the conditions required for that collaboration. Thus a larger organic whole comes into existence, and a wider span of perceptive awareness is realized by that whole than any cell or organ by itself can win. From what then did each cell derive its meed of subconscious sensitivity ? Why not in the same way ? —by uniting at its level more minute elements that are ready for such cooperative integration. Research in intercellular structure seems (so far as I can tell) to leave room for this hypothesis. Is not Smiley Blanton then quite credible when he says that love

"is not an external accompaniment of life,
but the very stuff out of which life is
fashioned. . . . It is the energy of love which
constructs our body in the first place, and it is
this love-energy which serves thereafter to keep its
numerous parts working harmoniously together."*

10

When the whole evolution of life is thus viewed, what further insights become plausible ?

If a cell in a person's body can perceive in some dim sense, still it apparently cannot perceive the organism of which it is a part as related to other organisms ; any such larger whole lies beyond its horizon. It simply fills its own role along with its companion cells, in loyal devotion to the well-being of that organism. To use a teleological phrase that may be justified, the billion cells that make up a human body cooperate with each other so that the body can function as a unit at a more complex level, but without being aware themselves of what life at that level is like. That is, no cell sees, hears, or thinks in the meaning those verbs have for us, but the body as a whole can do so, and each cell shares in the richer experience thus realized. Hence in the conscious awareness of a person the sensitivity of the cells in his body is not lost ; it gains a new quality and capacity in the whole that takes form through their collaboration.

Moreover, a quite general conclusion becomes plausible. Perhaps this description applies at all levels of complexity, from the simplest inorganic units to those that transcend human perception. If so, then the affinity of a person with other persons and groups is not lost in the social whole formed by their intercommunication, but contributes toward a new capacity in the distinctive mode of awareness arising at the superior level.

So we naturally turn toward the bigger units whose existence, by analogy and dim intuition, thus appears possible. Human beings combine in groups for the sake of which they subordinate their individual lives ; many of these groups, *e.g.*, a politically organized society or a university, live in a more extensive time-span than that of the individual person. And some of them have all the characteristics of an organism except that, so far as we know, they communicate with each other only through

* *Love or Parish, op. cit.*, p. 54.

their members. But this limitation may be due to the narrow capacity of perceivers at the human level. Just as a person reaches out directly toward other persons with no dependence when doing so on what is happening to the cells in his body, so any such larger entity, if it has become sufficiently unified, may be able to reach out directly toward other entities in the universe that have also become unified at its level. In this case, intercommunication at that higher level would take place in whatever form is possible. All our experience seems to fit into this conclusion.

What entity could be expected to achieve this cooperative wholeness as a higher unity, and exemplify the greater sensitivity thus hinted at ?

An enticing answer from the viewpoint of earth-dwellers is : The community of man. That community, though not yet objectively existent, is more than a fantasy. A trend toward it can be seen. The stage of primitive tribal life, characterized by the scattering of separate groups moved more by centrifugal than by centripetal forces, has already been left behind and replaced by a stage of intensive interaction where the centripetal forces, though still weak, are manifestly at work. By an imaginative extension of this trend one can envision an all-inclusive community, in which every person and group progresses without needless obstruction while reaching out to share what all other persons and groups are attaining in their corresponding progress.

Furthermore, are not souls committed to continued spiritual growth living in that community even now ? They enjoy fellowship with each other and are seeking to realize it with all men. Nothing can take from them the rewarding fulfillment experienced in their comradeship. What will be possible when the community thus exemplified has become stronger and is participated in more widely ? Would it not be a better integrated and more stable society than has thus far been realized, with science and a panoramic philosophy as its mind, world-wide economic interchange as its bloodstream, and the creative arts as its imaginative venture toward the infinite wholeness beyond ?

If this analogy is sound, one possibility would be a sensitive outreach toward entities elsewhere in the universe that are achieving stability at the same evolutionary level. Suitable organs for making contact with them would naturally develop and an active opening of communication would follow. Direct interaction between the community of man as thus evolving and comparable entities elsewhere in the universe would take place. Maybe the entire career of man on the surface of our planet is

the life of a cell within some larger organic whole, and is making its unique contribution—however long or short his career proves to be—toward the growing experience of that whole. Each person then, by identifying with the evolving world community, will fill his role in the superhuman cell thus formed. To be sure, he is restricted to the human level so far as the daily detail of his experience goes, but in the joy of mystic union he can feel the thrill of that superhuman mode of existence. A very hearting implication is that even were man to exterminate himself in suicidal blindness, his career will have played its part in the life of a superior entity ; the lesson it can teach of achievement and to tragedy will not be lost.

Should the objection be pressed that any such larger whole must have a shape which is unimaginable in terms of our experience, the answer is "Of course. But the shape of biological organisms on the earth varies enormously. Why should entities that arise from collaboration at a higher level not be free to take whatever shape the conditions of their life require ?"

So the interstellar communication we want to conceive in some rational fashion may be communication between these superhuman wholes ; and such an interchange may now be going on. If organized beings do exist through the unifying power of mutual collaboration at that complex level, they must live in a vaster time-span as well as in a vaster and very different spatial structure than we are acquainted with. They may easily overcome the handicaps to communication that individual persons interacting at the human level find insuperable. It is intriguing to fancy what the interplay might be like between the community of man in its evolving character and comparable communities elsewhere in the unbounded universe, as long as we avoid confusing fancy with fact. Some such communities may be similar to ours in their evolution but have stressed spiritual more than material progress, with the outcome thus to be expected ; many may have developed on a quite different biological base than ours, so that we cannot imagine their state or their distinctive capacities.

Can more light be thrown on what life for such a whole organized at that higher level would be like ? Perhaps it can, in two directions.

First, by pursuing the thought that through basic growth man wins entrance, not into a heaven of unalloyed bliss, but into a far greater humanity—an ampler dimension of human existence. One of the keenest insights of religious seers is that the paradise for which men perennially

yearn is not some realm separate from ordinary life, but is that life itself as unified in a spiritual whole. No utopia can be expected ; life in that ampler setting is presumably as adventurous as life in any narrower arena. It will have its perilous possibilities of evil as well as its appealing possibilities of good.

In this vista a person identifies himself with the human community that is moving toward its destiny in interaction with realities beyond as well as within the horizon of terrestrial existence. His experience grows in perceptive vision and life-enhancing power as in all other satisfying ways. He is sustained by deepening union with the All-embracing Whole and by comradeship with all others who share his dedication. Each of them, like himself, is a cell in the heart and mind of the community of man ; each is a member of the "catholic" church in the inspiring original meaning of this word. In that identification he is doing, at the human level with its distinctive capacities, what each cell in a living body is doing at its level by contributing its bit toward the life of that body.

Such a person looks hopefully forward to fuller embodiment of the community of man but, dedicated to it, he lives in that community now. And he realizes that the detailed form it takes in the future will be different from anything that could at present be imagined. His serene faith is that neither the unknown future of that community nor the unfathomable region beyond our earthly horizon need be feared. Both are partially shrouded in mystery, but since it is the mystery of love it can be trusted.

The second direction in which further light may be won concerns the relation between spiritual and physical existence. The influential Platonic tradition has fostered the belief that a disembodied life is attainable and would alone satisfy man's persistent aspiration. But the concept of the soul as an interactive field points toward a different view. Very likely man cannot get along without a body. However, what we naturally think of as his body may be only the one with which he begins life. Can we become less dependent on it by making our own a larger body ?

This should not be a startling idea. Consider the obvious fact that, as soon as a person enters a less cramped mode of existence than that of his infantile longings and their gratification, he acquires a larger body. In a simple form such a larger body is familiar to everyone ; we use tools which extend our physical powers, and they can be described as an extension of the body. The telephone extends man's power to communicate beyond the area that his unaided voice can reach.

But there are other forms too, which are more enlightening. Think of what happens when a person develops aspirations, and learns how to progress in realizing them. Everything that becomes conducive to their realization is thereby part of his larger body. In such progress the original body proves a source of frustration as well as a vital aid, and this experience encourages the hope that at death one is freed from it. From Plato's viewpoint that body is a prison, and there is an obvious sense in which he is right. One's bodily organs get old and feeble while his mind can still be active. They are easily distracted by vicissitudes in the environment, and messages from those organs easily distract his mind. Hence liberation from such bondage is an essential aspect of basic growth. The death of the body would put an end to the obstacles it has posed to that growth.

Yet—once more—can one get along without a body? To be embodied is not evil; the persistent challenge is to make whatever body one has a means to the supreme values. The crucial question then becomes: What kind of body does the liberated spirit need, and how is it won? It may be that the process of liberation is itself the acquisition of a larger and more enduring body than the body with which life began. However, no such larger body is donned like a coat; one must actively make it his own, and in greater or lesser degree that is what each person does in the course of living. Everything in the total field that is influenced by him takes its place in the bodily medium of the self he is growing into. In some slight degree the whole universe has become his body; his outflowing sensitivity embraces it and his action makes a difference to it.

If these thoughts are not deceptive, our guiding conviction will be that every person finds true fulfillment by identifying with the community of man in its superterrestrial as well as its terrestrial arena, while that community in turn finds fulfillment by identifying with whatever larger whole attracts it; there seems to be no upper limit to the dynamic hierarchy thus intuited.

By reconnoitering beyond the earthly horizon, we have ventured into a huge, uncharted domain. But it would seem that a realistic hope, consistent with scientific knowledge and grounded in spiritual insight, is justified for the career of the entire human race as well as for the career of any individual. The satellite of the sun that it has been our lot to inhabit is tiny, and occupies an inconspicuous spot in a "spiral arm" of our galaxy, but it may be that man's life on it is making a contribution to some vaster destiny than we have in the past dared to glimpse.

THE HUMAN JOURNEY

Outline of the Plan of Lectures

INTRODUCTION

- a. This book aims to be a millennial report on human evolution and to express an over-all vision of man in his prospect for the future.
- b. Is a realistic hope for the human race possible ?
This question especially challenges today because of unprecedented perils of destruction.
- c. The heart of man's present crisis.
Persistence of parochial attitudes with their accompanying emotions, in a world that has become universally interdependent.
- d. Who is man ? How can we understand him in this setting ?
The indispensable contribution of history and the sciences of man.
- e. Can a broader perspective on him be valuable ?
Yes, if its limitations are recognized.

CHAPTER I. The Great Historical Transformation

- a. A survey of human history in a long run perspective.
Why such a perspective is essential to dependable understanding
Comparison of man's life and thought 8000 years ago with his life and thought today.
Basic needs determining the course of history, as viewed in the setting of that comparison :
 - 1) Need to know the forces of environing nature so as to live with them successfully—
This need dominates primitive life.
 - 2) Need to learn to live successfully with one's fellow men—
This need increasingly dominates the quest for civilization.
 - 3) Need for a life-enhancing relation to God, which is a persistent need in all ages.

b. Man's grave limitations and main resources**1) In primitive life :**

The limitation of viewing the world as controlled by mysterious forces to be appeased—

Illustrated by primitive "science".

The main resources :

A powerful urge toward preservation of himself and his tribe.

A capacity to widen awareness of himself and the surrounding world.

These resources lead under forward-looking leaders to the development of science, which adequately meets the first need.

2) In the quest for civilization :

The basic limitation and resources are the same as primitive man's but are shown in the setting of the second need.

In that setting the resources slowly lead toward a world-wide human community.

c. Constructive forces aiding the quest for community and for full individual growth

Minor forces : Travel, trade, diplomacy, early science and philosophy.

Major forces : Pioneers of the living civilized religions, who exemplify unbounded openheartedness toward all persons.

Those pioneers explored the way toward :

- 1) Depth of experience in each person.
- 2) An expanding sense of human brotherhood, building the foundations of a community beyond tribal and national limits.
- 3) Awareness of God as an encompassing spiritual reality fostering depth and community.

d. Common characteristics of the civilized faiths as compared with primitive religion :

- 1) A sense of moral responsibility toward all men.
- 2) A monistic view of God and the universe.
- 3) A spiritual conception of the human soul.
- 4) A new experience of joyous fulfillment in relation to God and man.

How those faiths have compromised with secular forces in the course of history—the present outcome.

CHAPTER II. Emotion, Awareness, and Valuation as Basic Forces in Man

- a. How does man, primitive or civilized, learn to understand environing realities and himself ?

The primary forces revealed in the process :

Emotion and expanding awareness.

The rise and function of valuation.

How these forces are revealed : in primitive thinking,
in modern science

- b. A major illuminating insight, taught by the way these forces work :

All perception and thought are relative to factors in man.

This truth may seem to lead to a hopeless skepticism—

But developments in science and in widening experience confirm it.

It can give constructive guidance in our quest for improved understanding of ourselves and the world.

- c. Summary assessment of man's present state

The short run prospect is gloomy.

In the long run the greatest force is man's growing perception of what is dependably good.

CHAPTER III. From Unperceptive Bondage to Free Growth in Love

- a. Introduction : Man's fundamental achievement and fundamental handicap.

The achievement : Progress in dependable understanding of himself and his world.

The handicap : Emotions and urges not as yet brought in tune with the demands of reality.

They pose the universal and persistent problem of human life.

- b. Serious obstructions revealing that handicap

Each is a form of self-centeredness or limited-group egotism.

- 1) Self-righteousness
- 2) A static orientation
- 3) Pugnacity
- 4) Greed
- 5) Male supremacy and undisciplined sexuality
- 6) Sadistic cruelty

These vices are not fatefully fixed, but they are a colossal challenge which can only slowly be met.

Transition : What important phases of man's positive achievement can be detected and described ?

c. Basic growth :

A process including and transcending physical and mental growth.

Is every person, every society, and the human race as a whole in such a process ?

d. Love : The most important emotion and the supreme value in human life and thought—basic growth is in and toward love.

Its two dimensions :

- 1) Compassionate feeling
- 2) Expanding awareness

Two crucial directions of its evolution :

- 1) Toward greater inclusiveness
- 2) Toward greater conquest of self-centeredness—

Ways in which that conquest is revealed.

What is a person like who exemplifies it in high degree ?

Is there an intrinsic bond between love and realistic hope ?

e. The goal of that growth is not utopia but a greater humanity—greater in all its varied capacities.

f. In what form is a world community possible ?

CHAPTER IV. Toward a Greater Humanity

a. Introduction : Has some progress been made by mankind as a whole toward that greater humanity ?

b. A transition can be seen from maintaining social order by force toward the use of more humane methods

The method of exchange gradually replaces the method of threat, in international relations and elsewhere.

Evidence from the present relation between the U. S. and the two great Communist powers.

- c. A gradual rise of the common people to participation in the values of civilized life is visible.
 Problem posed by the readiness of the masses to follow a leader.
 The guiding ideal of equality—It is the right of everyone to full respect as a person
- d. What is being contributed by the present super-powers toward the future of mankind ?
 - 1) The “American century” has begun and is well underway
 Industrial technology appears to be its main contribution.
 - 2) In time the Chinese century will dawn
 A humane moral perspective promises to be its main contribution.
 - 3) An Indian century in the distant future ?
 It would unite the social and spiritual capacities of man.

CHAPTER V. Science as a Major Guide on the Journey

- a. Introduction : Both science and religion are modes of interaction between persons and other realities.
 Distinctive features of a philosophical approach to scientific history—appreciative understanding of the evolution of science in its human setting.
 The nature and vital role of “presuppositions” : in science, religion, and other modes of interaction.
 Their importance in an understanding of science.
- b. The historical and philosophical background of modern science
 It does not provide a philosophy of life and the universe.
- c. What it does provide is :
 - 1) An especially valuable kind of knowledge, namely predictive knowledge and the technology achieved through it.
 - 2) A hidden but equally valuable contribution toward a free community of man.
- d. The predictive knowledge sought by modern science, which reveals :
 A radical change from ancient conceptions of science, but a return to the central aim of primitive science.
 The humane possibilities in predictive knowledge, which can be realized through automation.

- e. The contribution of science toward a free democratic community
 - Scientists collaborating in their search for truth exemplify a free democratic society—a model of wise social organization.
 - Episodes in scientific history that confirm these conclusions
 - They reveal progress toward more dependable and widely shared explanations of the world.

CHAPTER VI. Religion as a Major Guide on the Journey

- a. Introduction
 - Its essence : not a set of dogmas but a way to fuller life for man as he relates to his fellows and to the whole of reality.
 - How the influence of the spiritual pioneers spreads and affects all social institutions
- b. Outstanding developments in the history of civilized religion :
 - Through its sense of universal responsibility it becomes moralized.
 - God becomes conceived as a morally ideal being.
 - The conception of God becomes more and more democratic.
 - Special significance of the doctrine of divine incarnation.
 - Significance and promise of the conviction that God is present in all men and women.
 - God as "wholeness" of self, society, the universe.
- c. The distinctive contribution toward man's spiritual progress of
 - 1) Taoism : Inner peace won by the conquest of anxious competitiveness.
 - 2) Buddhism : A perceptive solution of the primary problem of life, posed by the universal experience of suffering.
 - 3) Hinduism : Realization of union with God and with all persons in their quest for dependable and lasting fulfillment.
 - 4) Christianity : Salvation through the transforming power of love.
 - A suggested non-theological interpretation of its central message.
- d. The main weakness and main strength of civilized religion thus far in its history.
 - The weakness : Emphasis on some doctrine about the founder of this or that faith.

The strength : Transformation of a man's or woman's self so that it becomes

More at home in the infinite whole of reality.

More capable of creative growth in relation to oneself and to other persons.

CHAPTER VII. Journeying Beyond the Horizon

a. Looking ahead from the present human situation on the earth :

The coming rebirth of spiritual religion

With a new cosmology and a purified moral ideal.

In its present plight humanity seems ripe for such a rebirth.

What needs will it meet ?

- 1) Recovery and revision of past insights, in both primitive and civilized religion.
- 2) Openness and sensitivity of the living religions to each other.
- 3) The new pioneers will learn from one another and will foster spiritual independence in their followers.
- 4) New visions of the glory of God and the possibilities of men in unlimited interaction and intercommunication.

Should we expect a single universal religion to take form ? No, an end to hostile conflict would seem to be enough.

b. Looking beyond the earthly horizon :

Concepts that gain meaning in this transcendent setting

God, immortality, and the ultimate destiny of mankind.

God, envisioned as infinite "wholeness".

Why this concept is superior to that of "unity"

Theistic and mystic descriptions of the presence of God.

God and soul as interpreted theologically by the concept of "field".

Love, in relation to death and immortal life—

"We are mortal when we are loveless, immortal when we love".

The two meanings of "life"—as ended by death, as including death in a larger fulfillment

How the latter meaning is clarified by cosmic evolution and the process of growth

c. A glimpse of the ultimate dynamic structure of the universe and man's place in it.
